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Adventure

MAGAZINE

MAR.

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DEAD MAN'S DEEP

by CARL D. LANE

MAR. 1952 ADVENTURE MAGAZINE 25 Cent

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I KNEW YOU'D LIKE HIM, COLONEL. I'VE APPROACHED HIM REGARDING A JUNIOR PARTNERSHIP

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NEXT ISSUE OUT FEB. 20th

Adventure
MAGAZINE

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MARCH, 1952 — Vol. 125, No. 5

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Cover painted for Adventure by Norman Saunders
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City ..... State.....

THE CAMP-FIRE

ONE way or another, we've watched a number of camp-fires die, and felt the chill beyond. But there's something about a blaze lit—and kept burning—by other hands, that warms you more than your own.

It's where we touch home.

Mr. Rex R. Benson writes from California, anent the reactivation of *Adventure's* identification service we proposed in the November issue. The brand he throws on the fire is from an older, brighter blaze—may ours burn as long!

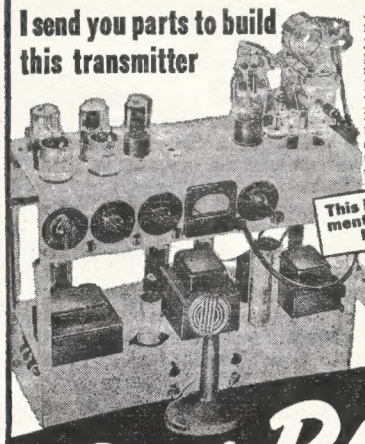
Do we get more sentimental as we grow older? The letter from F. S. Webster and your comments in the November issue bring up a flood of memories. Just looking at the enclosed Identification Card is enough to start me along the back trail of the past forty years. Back to a half-grown kid doing his first hitch in the Navy, with an itchy foot and a head filled with dreams. Through three wars and five revolutions, from fore-castle to quarterdeck; sixteen years in the jungle. . . . one stretch of twenty-two months without coming out to civilization. . . .

But it is too long to tell, and, anyhow, you did not ask for a saga. What I wanted to say was that the old Identification Service was a great institution and if it could be revived I believe it would be a boost for the magazine. In the old days I met many men who treasured their cards as the one tie between the ragged edges of the world where they wandered and the remembered homeland. This one of mine has been in my wallet since, I believe, about 1913. If it can be brought up to

(Continued on page 8)

You Practice COMMUNICATIONS

I send you parts to build this transmitter

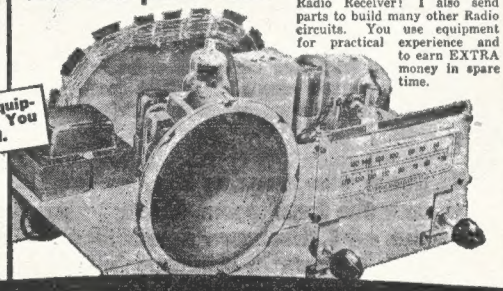


As part of my Communications Course you build this low power broadcasting transmitter, learn how to put a station "on the air," perform procedures demanded of Broadcast Station operators, make many tests.

This is just part of the equipment my students build. You keep all parts I send.

You Practice Radio SERVICING

on this modern radio you build with parts I send



As part of my Servicing Course, I send you the speaker, tubes, chassis, transformer, loop antenna, EVERYTHING you need to build this modern, powerful Radio Receiver! I also send parts to build many other Radio circuits. You use equipment for practical experience and to earn EXTRA money in spare time.

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New, special TV kits furnished to build high-definition SCOPE . . . RF OSCILLATOR with flyback power supply . . . complete TV set . . . many other units. You see pulse, trapezoidal, saw-tooth wave forms. Get valuable PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE locating and correcting TV troubles. Mail coupon for facts, pictures and prices!

Learn Servicing or Communications Practice at Home in Spare Time

J. E. SMITH, President
National Radio Institute

Do you want good pay, a job with a bright future and security? Would you like to have a profitable shop or store of your own? If so, find out how you can realize your ambition in the fast growing, prosperous RADIO-TELEVISION industry. Even without Television, the industry is bigger than ever before. 90 million home and auto Radios, 3100 Broadcasting Stations, expanding use of Aviation and Police Radio, Micro-wave Relay, Two-way Radio for buses, taxis, etc., are making opportunities for Servicing and Communications Technicians and FCC-Licensed Operators.

Television is TODAY'S Good Job Maker

In 1950, over 5,000,000 TV sets sold. By 1954, 25,000,000 TV sets estimated. Over 100 TV Stations now operating. Authorities predict 1,000 TV Stations. This means more jobs, good pay for qualified men all over the United States and Canada.

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I TRAINED THESE MEN

"I have been operating my own Servicing business. In two years I did $14,000 worth of business; net profit $6,850. Have one full time employee, an NRI student."—PHILLIP G. BROGAN, Louisville, Ky.

"Four years ago, I was a bookkeeper, with a hand-to-mouth salary. Now I am a Radio Engineer with a key station of the American Broadcasting Company network."—NORMAN H. WARD, Ridgefield Park, New Jersey.

"When halfway through the NRI course, I made $5 to $8 a week fixing sets in my spare time. Am now selling and installing Television sets and antennas."—E. J. STREITENBERGER, New Boston, O.

"My first job was operator with KDLR, obtained for me by your Graduate Service Dept. I am now Chief Engineer of Police Radio Station WQOX. I never hesitate to endorse NRI."—T. S. NORTON, Hamilton, Ohio.

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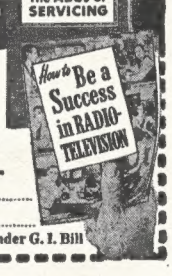

(Continued from page 6)

date, or a new one issued in case the service is reactivated, I would appreciate it. BUT in any case, I want this one back! We have been through too much together to be parted at this late date.

Give Alexander Wallace a pat for JUNGLE WALLAH in the November issue. It is almost in the manner of Mundy and Dwyer, and to those of us who have followed *Adventure* since that first issue in November 1910 there is no higher praise than that.

FOR those who came in late, we might go over the facts again, briefly. Some forty years ago *Adventure* issued identification cards to such *Adventurers* who felt they might come in handy. In these, the bearer was identified by *number only,* and notice was given in eleven languages to notify us in case of accident or death—*Adventure,* in turn, notified the bearer's next of kin. This system proved particularly valuable in instances where carrying direct identification might have proven hazardous to the bearer.

In the drift of the changing years, and clashing editorial interests, this service was discontinued many years ago. Today, however, *Adventure* stands ready to reactivate the cards of any holders who may care to send them in, together with instructions as to nearest kin.

We would like to stress that this is more than a sentimental gesture. We're anxious to revitalize a function which, to us, is inevitable for a magazine called *Adventure.* In the process, we're more than grateful to the many *Adventurers* who've responded—and our hat is off to Mr. Benson for an entirely different reason as well.

For having survived all the editors of Adventure, since 1910.

THE following comment from Preston S. Lincoln, LCdr USNR (Ret), throws further light on the *Cuirassiers of Alexander*—and hinges on another topic as well, one we'd like to come back to a little later in this Camp-fire. Mr. Lincoln writes:

Mr. Voight's article about the Cuirassiers of Alexander in your November 1951 issue remarks that after the Punic Wars the Romans never developed their heavy cavalry; but in Talbot Mundy's story "The Altar of the Legion" published in *Adventure* some time after 1923, he mentions cataphracti as fighting the Saxons in South Wales and Cornwall just before the Legionis Asa (Lyonesse of the Arthurian legends) sank beneath the Atlantic. He even mentions the way the cataphracti used their lances, which were counter-weighted at the butt so they could be used like a dagger.

About that same period (1923-1933) *Adventure* published a story by Arthur D. H. Smith (one of his "Grey Maiden" Sword series) entitled "A Trooper of the Thessalians" which was an account of this veteran of Arbela.

There are several possible reasons why the Romans did not use heavy cavalry extensively after the Punic Wars. When these were over there was no major power left to use such cavalry against Roman forces, and heavy cavalry were useless against the Parthian mounted archers and the light cavalry of Arabia and North Africa, who could evade shock tactics.

When heavy cavalry were needed in Western Europe or Palestine the Romans utilized Batavian or German cavalry as "Allies of the Republic" and in the Roman-Jewish warfare in Palestine from 60-70 AD, Herodian heavy cavalry served as auxiliaries to the legions there. See "The Doomed City" a story of the destruction of Jerusalem by John R. Carling, circa 1910.

At Pharsala, Pompey had a strong force of Equestrian cavalry which he posted on his left flank. Ceasar had no cavalry, so to protect his exposed right wing he formed the 3rd or rear rank of his Legionary line into a special counter cavalry reserve which he kept behind his Legionary line until the Pompeian cavalry charged. Then Ceasar's reserve infantry counter-charged, and by his direction struck at the faces of the aristocratic Pompeian cavalrymen, who broke and fled. Ceasar's "foot cavalry" then enveloped the Pompeian Legionary left flank and routed it also, a la Chancellorsville. See "A Friend of Ceasar" by Davis, also around 1910-1915. This proved that Legionary infantry could stand up to heavy cavalry skillfully handled.

Down to the time of the "Barrack Emperors" who followed Marcus Aurelius, the Imperial Legions were engaged mainly in frontier guarding where mobility was more important than shock power in cavalry. When shock power in cavalry was needed, the Romans secured it from "Allies" but it did not help Varrus in Germany because of the swampy ground.

Have been an Adventure fan ever since Christmas AD 1925, when some 1923 issues, and especially some stories by Harold Lamb and Talbot Mundy helped me through a night of agony in a hospital. Have warmed myself at the Camp-Fire many times since, and even spoken up there occasionally.

Very happy indeed, sir, to have you with us again. Stay with us, please—we'll be back.

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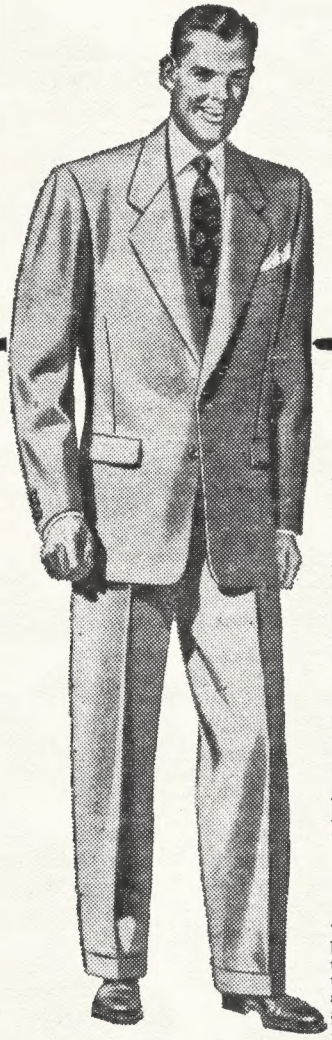
I need 500 Men to wear SAMPLE SUITS!



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(Continued from page 8)

NEARLY everyone is familiar with the work of Carl D. Lane, whose articles and fiction have appeared in the largest national magazines—and one of whose finest stories heads off the issue of *Adventure.* A series of—to us—fortuitous circumstances enabled us to acquire *Dead Man's Deep,* and we present it with complete immodesty—in fact, with pride.

Of himself, Mr. Lane says:

I was born October 12th, 1902, in that place which vaudeville actors used to consider so funny; Weehawken, N. J.—and that rapidly brings us to the question of why in hell a guy 48 years old should risk his aging hide in a Piper Cub piloted by a screwball herring spotter. You see, in those 48 years I learned how to write, be a husband and father and a sailor. Marie, who is the patient gal of my dreams, claims that I excel in the latter talent—and so I find myself under sail much of the year.

Family? Yes—there's Bob, 22, who builds sailing yachts in his own yard at Friendship, Maine, and Alice, 13, who tries 'em out after school. We live hard by the sea in Rockport, Maine, in an ancient skipper's home, now violated by oil heat, a "flush" or two, a deep freeze and a writer in his old "parlour."

The herring boats are steaming by again and some twiner has moored his dory in our harbor—which, by unwritten sea law, makes this harbor his to fish—and any day now I expect to hear the drone of Hugo's yellow Piper as he circles the herring schools. And if he zooms off to a fish port, I'll expect the thrill of watching the herring-ers as they set on 'em and close 'em off—and fresh pan-fried herring for lunch the next day.

FROM Steve Frazee, the following addenda on Hell-High:

The portal of the Bowman Tunnel, of the Great Western Mines Co., stood at 13,860 feet. More commonly called the Darling, this silver mine near Garfield, Colo., had a shaft about 200 feet higher.

At the Darling today you can find silver specimens that assay very high, a few rotted logs near the caved portal, and the wind across the crest of the Rockies. The wind does not blow all the time. When the air is soft with summer, there are times when you can hear the clink of a small rock a mile away.

Of course the wind helped, but it was the tightening feeling of isolation, and other tensions, that put the pressure on the men in the story. You went up to the Darling no later than mid-October, and about April you tried to get down. No webs were taken up; you'd lose some of your crew that way. Everybody fell off the hill together in the spring, on snowshoes made of cracker boxes and the thin fir that used to come around wheels of cheese.

Like whiskey at extreme altitudes, small incidents reacted on men abnormally. One day John Lanoue was in the outhouse, which was bulwarked half its height with rock. The wind got it anyway, door down. John did not speak to his rescuers, and they said nothing to him.

He went out an hour or so later to fill the big dishpan with snow for water. He was doing fine, and then he turned to spill snow from his shovel into the pan—and the pan had departed like a flying disk. He watched it thoughtfully. For several hours he smoked his pipe in the cabin and spoke to no one. Generally, he was a most pleasant man.

In spite of the fact that Darling winter crews were picked like submariners, the young bucks became snorty and the old ones grew moody.

Long before April there were all sorts of explosions brewing at the Darling; but everything was forgotten the moment it was time to start down.

Maybe the Darling was not, as claimed, the highest mine in the world, but it was high enough.

You can see the wind blowing snow up there now.

WE THINK Ted Janes' *Last Cartridge,* in this issue—which marks his first appearance in *Adventure,* culminating successful sales in other magazines—is the best introduction Mr. Janes could possibly have to readers of *Adventure.* Nevertheless, we asked him for a few personal background notes:

I don't know that there is much I can tell you about the story other than that it was suggested by the prospectors and bush pilots whom I met on a fishing trip in northern Canada. Jim McLeod, I think, is typical of the men who set out through the wilderness with packs on their backs and a spirit of adventure in their hearts.

I was born in Westfield, Mass. in 1908, educated at Deerfield Academy and Williams College and since then have spent most of my time in the publishing business. I was camping, fishing and later associate editor of Outdoors Magazine and have published two outdoor books and numerous articles and stories. A few months ago I moved back to Westfield where I am spending my time hunting, fishing and free lancing along with an assignment as Travel Editor of *Hunting & Fishing* magazine. I have one wife, two children and a springer spaniel named Ruff.

(Continued on page 12)

6 MAGIC WORDS GIVE YOU DAILY CASH

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Amazing, but true! The most sensational offer ever made! Can you imagine how much money you could make writing orders for wonderful nylons that actually cost nothing unless satisfactory? Is there any woman who would hesitate to wear beautiful nylons at OUR risk? Nothing like this has ever been heard of in the hosiery industry. Never before was it possible for any man or woman, young or old, to earn a steady income so easily!

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.....

(Continued from page 10)

ANOTHER newcomer is Chick Manwaring, whose *Journey Into Fear* reached our desk without introduction or fanfare of any kind—and is included in this lineup purely on its merits. Which is how we like to get 'em. Mr. Manwaring writes:

I was born and raised in the wilds of Utah, which probably accounts for my urge to explore and travel, and my love for the outdoors. In fact, it might have started in the early 'thirties', when at the age of seventeen, another fellow and I built a raft and started down the Colorado River, headed for Lower California. We got only as far as Yuma, Arizona.

Since then, I have spent much of my time exploring, hunting, fishing, and paning gold throughout the western States (not much success on the gold).

I served a five-year hitch in the army during the last war, two years of which were spent on the Alaskan Peninsula and the Aleutian Islands. In my spare time, and when the weather permitted, (which was rare) I hunted the Alaskan Brown Bear, Ptarmigan and Geese, and caught some of the most beautiful Salmon and Steelhead I have ever seen.

After the war, I decided to settle down. I married a girl from Maine, and for a honeymoon, we wandered through California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho and Nevada, searching for semi-precious stones and good trout streams.

We were advised that when we began to raise a family, those constant trips of ours would necessarily cease. We now have two children, a boy, twenty-seven months, and a girl, ten months old. We have been living in Florida for eight months now, and come spring, when that old restless itch becomes too strong, we'll probably start out again for points unknown. But as always, with the typewriter as part of the camping equipment. My wife and I have decided that until the kids are in school, and we HAVE to settle down . . . well, there are just too many exciting places to go, too many streams and lakes we haven't fished, and too many mountains challenging us to climb up on top to see what lies beyond.

FROM Camp Polk, La., the following—one of a flood of similar letters, which would suggest that we're on the right track. The writer is Edward E. Graham, WOJG USA.

To-day when I saw *Adventure* it had the face of an old friend. Last winter when you began your experiments I wrote you to voice my own objections to some of the things you were doing and I now want to express my pleasure in two of your latest changes, the new (old) cover and the illustrations. Two other changes I would like very much to see—some good serials and a larger magazine—and published either once or twice monthly. I began reading *Adventure* about 1924 while a private in the old 14th regular Cavalry and have read, I think, every issue since then although sometimes long after their publication date, in Egypt, Italian East Africa, India, China, The Aleutians, etc.

To-day I tried to figure out the great period of the old magazine and couldn't come to a real decision but have always preferred the period of the 1920s.

Please a bigger magazine, with longer stories, more often.

Thank you for your recent improvements.

AND now to get back to an idea we were struggling with when we first squatted at this month's *Camp-fire*. Somewhere around the blaze—certainly at one of the countless *Camp-fires* with which *Adventure* has dotted its yesterdays, there's a man we'd like to meet.

Perhaps he's Mr. F. S. Webster, from the November meeting, perhaps Mr. Benson, Mr. Lincoln or Mr. Graham, of the aforegoing paragraphs. Perhaps he's someone we've not yet heard from—there's just one qualification he must have. He must belong to the bridgade of early readers whose suggestions and guidance both we and our predecessors on *Adventure* have both enjoyed and found so helpful.

He may be The Earliest Reader. Or simply the old-timer who gives us the best and most workable suggestion for improving our magazine in the next two-month period—or sends in the most helpful criticism of current issues. Suggestions may be new—or for the revival of past features. The rules are not definite, for this is not a contest, strictly speaking, nor a promotional stunt. Let's call it a friendly gesture, not on the part of *Adventure's* changing editors, but on *Adventure's* itself.

We have at hand what we feel is a fine oil painting—the original of this month's cover. As a reciprocal handshake, we'd like to present it to one of you, signed by the artist—as a memento from *Adventure*, whom you have so well remembered.

EGJ

YOUR CHOICE OF TWO GREAT BOOKS

GAUDY'S LADIES, by Clark McMeekin
(Published at $3.00)

This is the story of Gaudy Robertson—actor, roustabout, gambler, and the women who, one way or another, gave color to Gaudy's life.

There was Neil Perry, lovely and willful, who ruled Gaudy's heart and jilted him for a stage career. There was Criquette, the demi-mondaine with whom he knew hours of excitement; and black Chaddie, who saved his life and would gladly have been his slave. There was sweet Frannie Lee, whose simplicity won him in marriage—and whose artfulness held him, in a manner of speaking, to the end.

There's drama and excitement aplenty in this story of Gaudy and his women, there's color and the feel of life in the vividly authentic background. For lovers of Americana, for anyone who appreciates a good story well told, it's first-rate reading.

OR

INHERIT THE NIGHT by Robert Christie
(Published at $3.00)

It was sundown when Kurt Werden reached the tiny pueblo high in the Andes. He carried a heavy pistol and an old newspaper clipping which read, ENEMY LEADER DIES IN BESIEGED CITY. He demanded an impossible thing—to be taken to San Cobar.

The villagers had heard of San Cobar. The old legends said that it was a place of great wealth. But it lay beyond the mountains from which no man had returned alive. True, El Borracho, the drunken trader, had returned from his mysterious wanderings with rich ornaments, but he was now far gone in drink.

The stranger showed El Borracho more gold than he had ever seen, enough to make him forget the terrible mountain gales, the yawning crevasses.

What happened beyond the mountains is an unforgettable story—the story of an arch criminal alone among a strange people who did not know the meaning of suspicion, of fear, of hatred, of death, but who were to learn.

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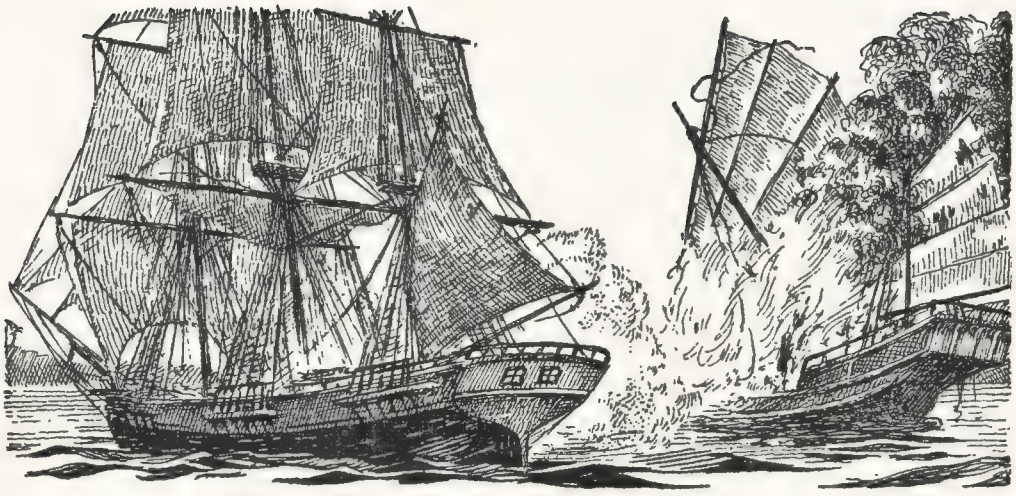

DEAD MAN'S DEEP

"Can the blood of a pirate," Ithiel asked his crimson tides, "run as red as a better man's?"

By CARL D. LANE

SINCE 1869, the year in which Captain Elihu Hempstead decided that the family had become numerous enough and famous enough to meet in self admiration, the seafaring Hempsteads and their connections have met annually under the ancient elms of the original Asa Hempstead house on India Plain. Even today the sea is still strong in their blood and you may meet, on that June afternoon, captains and chief engineers and admiralty lawyers and shipbuilders and navy men.

The reunion is the traditional New England affair, commencing with a blackfish chowder, then moving leisurely on to a pageant and the reading of a historical paper. There is always a long prayer, and the meeting is bone dry, for the Hempstead moral code is tall and pure.

Miss Libby Cudder who read this year, was a connection-by-marriage, which is a long way from a Hempstead, and was properly cautious in her reading. Grantha-Captain Gideon Hempstead sat sipping ginger tea, his thin hand cupping his ear, and you could see him nod from time to time and wondered whether it was in sleep or agreement.

"The bright escutcheon of a sea tradition so cherished by our family," Miss Libby read stiffly near the conclusion of her piece, "was never brighter than when Thomas Hempstead returned from the Orient with these jewels—truly an emperor's fortune. In a gesture understandable in one of such noble nature, Thomas presented the priceless casket and its contents to his mother, Liza Hempstead—"

"That's for seven shipmates who died on bloody Balintang on another day. . . ."

Old Gideon croaked violently, "Tom Hempstead wan't noble by a damnsight! Tom was a plain rascal."

"Thank you, Grantha." Miss Libby nodded, then again turned to her paper. "It is from Liza's personal diary, that we learn the story of Thomas. . . ."

Old Gideon creaked to his feet, "Well, mother never saw Tom the way he really was—like me and Ithiel and Dan'l did, but we set down the plain ungodly truth about him in our sea logs an' ledgers. Tom was a common pirate. Old Asa be turnin' in his everlastin' sod, the way you modern Hempsteads make free of plain truth—for in those days we all of us had right smart respect for truth and honor and the fine thin line a'tween what was right an' what was wrong. . . ."

BUT TOM HEMPSTEAD came home on a warming day in March, stepping off the New York sloop at Stonington as if he'd been gone a week, not six long years. It was twilight and the marsh peepers were taking up the song of the shipyards, like a thousand caulkers thumping oakum into dry pine plank. The sperm lights were flickering in Tom's old home town and the street boys played noisily on the wharves as Tom himself used to. But he wasted no time on sentimental reverie. That was never Tom's way. He whistled for a black boy to carry his bags and without a backward look strode off on the board path which curved around the spar yards and over the tide marsh to Asa's saltbox beneath the elms on India Plain.

"Is mother all right, boy?" Tom asked the blackamoor.

"Don' rightly know, suh," the pickaninny answered. "Who you? Who yo' mammy, mistah?"

Tom laughed shortly. He reckoned they'd forgotten him as they forgot so many who went down to the sea. But he had forgotten them also. Six years is a long time when they are years of boyhood turning to manhood and Tom had done a deal of living in that time. Yes, he supposed—like himself—the old town was different.

But then Tom had always been different, different from the Hempstead kin and different from Connecticut men. He was short, which was like his mother's side of the family and, unlike the sons of old Asa, a sudden, aggressive and unthinking man—reckless, you might call him. You could see that in the swing of his body when he walked and the cock of his head and, if you ever got to know him, in the working of his mind. He was burned the color of an Indian now and his restless black eyes, which were those of Liza herself, could move from generosity to danger, from innocence to cruelty with the speed of weather changes in the Caribbean. No man would name him the brother of cautious, heedful Ithiel who faithfully trod this same path home after a long voyage.

Tom paid off the black boy with a careless ten dollar note and pulled the bell cord at his mother's door.

The boy became bug-eyed. "Fo' me, suh?" he cried.

"Have you never seen a tenner, boy?"

"N-no, suh. Gem'pens on'y give me coppah, suh."

"Well," Tom grinned. "Here's another. You spend one and just keep the other to look at."

The door opened then and the yellow lamplight fell on Tom Hempstead and he was in his mother's arms. Liza was nearing sixty then but her savage mother-clutch made Tom wince.

"Ma!" he cried. "Ma, it's been so long!"

But even then, when his eyes should have been misty, Tom's quick glance was darting about the old familiar parlor. In a sweep he lived over those six years from home. Father was gone—there was black mourning cloth in dusting folds over his oval-framed portrait above the mantel shelf. Ithiel or Dan'l, both of whom had sailed before the mast and likely were masters now, had been home not long ago. Probably Ithiel; only Ithiel would carefully hang that pagan Chan beheading sword which was a common voyage souvenir of the Canton traders, so deliberately remote from the rosewood table on which lay Asa's great bible. And Gideon, too, was at sea, in the navy. His chromo portrait showed him at stiff attention in his lieutenant's jacket, as straight as the taut frigate main shrouds under which he stood.

"Tom, my bad Tom!" Liza called happily. "Oh, how I always prayed for you! I knew you'd come some day—but you could have sent word, Tom."

"I've been busy, ma," Tom said smoothly. "In a faraway corner of the earth. I've been building my business and my fortune, ma."

Liza held him at arm's length and demanded in quick alarm, "Tom, you haven't quit the sea?"

Tom chuckled. "No fear—I'm still a Hempstead. I have a whole fleet of ships, traders and coasters, way out in the China Sea and I often skipper 'em myself. But on shore I have a great warehouse and a plantation and a good verandaed house."

"Are you married, Tom?"

"Not yet but I mean to be," Tom said with that frankness which you never ascribed to a Hempstead man. "That's one reason I came home. Is Beth Morse still single?"

"Now, Tom," Liza said sternly, for Tom was still a little boy at her feet in some ways, "you know your brother Ithiel has always loved Beth. He's due back from the East in the *December Star* any time now. Tom, you were always bad. You can't fight your brother."

"I used to, ma. Ithiel never troubled me—he was too cautious. He always counted costs. A taste of my life would do him good."

"Tom, Tom, you were ever my wild one—reckless and heedless and sometimes I think plain ungodly. You were a bad boy, Tom. I hope you've changed."

"I'm rich now, ma," Tom grinned, "and I can afford to be whatever I want to be. But my coolies call me 'Most High' and I sleep in a bed once owned by a Ting-yuan prince. Look, ma—I brought you a little voyage present."

That was when Liza Hempstead received the satinwood casket of jewels. It was Tom who gave it to her the first time. Now Liza had seen enough jewels in her lifetime to know that a fabulous fortune lay sparkling in the slanting Connecticut sun. Elihu had taken his pay in the Orient in gems and so had Ithiel and Dan'l, but never had she seen such gems as these. They lay smouldering in their silken lair like brooding fires, stabbing the evening gloom like the swift Borealis of a crisp October night. Liza Hempstead felt almost wicked just looking at them. She pushed them toward Tom as if they were visibly tainted and evil.

"I shan't take them, Tom," she said quietly. "It's—it's not decent to have so much wealth."

"They're nothing." Tom laughed. "I have scores of cases of them, ma, my warehouse is running over with trunks and trunks of gold and silver. Ma, I could pave the marsh path in pure gold for you."

NOW that was no way to talk of wealth to a Hempstead. Liza sat straight in her old chair and looked levelly into Tom's black arrogant eyes. But she was thinking of her other sons who had sat in this room, weary after a long voyage, telling her of the distant lands to which they had sailed their packets and clippers and, eventually, shyly mentioning their profits. There were always profits, good profits, because trading was in their blood like sail-handling and navigating and driving men. And always Liza could see the danger and sweat and hard work behind the voyage profits which they brought to the Hempstead counting house hard by the clipper docks of New York. She was proud of her sons and their toil, for a lifetime of marriage to a Hempstead had left its mark on her and put into her blood too their traditions and values and standards.

"No man can honestly earn cases of jewels and trunks of gold in six years, Tom," Liza said and you could sense the deep anxiety in her voice. "We've a tidy sum in the Hempstead vaults. It took three generations to lay it up—a hundred years of prudence and labor and danger and risk, but it does not equal the worth of this one case of jewels, Tom. Why, these great pearls alone—a prince must have owned them!"

"A rajah of Rangoon," Tom said lightly. "They're worth better than a hundred thousand, ma."

"Take them away, Tom," Liza said then. "You were always my bad boy. You couldn't have earned this fortune honestly. How did you get these jewels, Tom?"

"Traded, bargained." Tom shrugged and avoided his mother's eyes. "Jewels are money on the China coast, as common as pennies in New Haven."

"Fiddle-de-dee! There is slavery and bloodshed and cruelty behind this fortune. It's wicked, Tom. It's not Hempstead

wealth and we do not want it in our vaults. Your grandfather left you more than money and ships, Tom. He left you a code and honor and a fear of God which men sometimes forget in far places. Oh, Tom, I understand you so well because I am not of old Asia's blood, either. But believe me, my son, his is the right and just way. So, thank you, Tom—but take back your gift."

Tom stood up then, the smile that always disarmed her broad and guileless. "Forget it, ma, and tell Hanah to open some of your peach plum preserve. I came across the world for a taste."

It was always that way with Tom. More than for any of her sons Liza Hempstead threw away her wits for Tom. Perhaps it was that she did not want to pry until she saw what she knew was there and was afraid of.

That evening Tom put the case of jewels on the mantel shelf under his father's portrait and took from his leather trunk a brand new woolen coat and stock of lacy Irish linen. It bore the name of New York's most expensive draper. He climbed carefully into the hired carriage for which he had sent Hanah and turned the matched team into the Westerly Road, on which Beth Morse lived.

"Don't forget she's your brother's, Tom," Liza called.

"Are they spoken?" Tom asked.

"Of course not. Ithiel has his every cent in the *December Star*. If he makes a good voyage, he'll have the start of his own fortune. Then he means to ask Beth—not before."

"Cautious, counting Ithiel!" Tom chuckled and clucked to the team.

Liza listened to him trotting the rig under the great elms and onto the dusty shunpike until the folds of Hoxie's Swale silenced the hoofbeats. Instinctively she sensed that Tom had gone, that she would not see him again. It was that way he had left her six years ago and so had he come back from oblivion within this day.

Liza went to her chamber then and lighted her candle and, for an hour, wrote in her diary. Who can say what she wrote there? A diary is a personal record, a record of the heart, not of a voyage or a counting house deal, and Liza could remember when she was not a Hempstead, when her black eyes had held the fire and daring of Tom's and the world had been a challenging place.

She said her lonely prayers with Asa's smooth worn Bible opened in the amber candlelight. But strangely she did not talk with God about Ithiel and Dan'l and Gideon who might this moment need His mercy in overcoming storm and shipwreck and the perils of the deep. She talked to God about Tom and asked Him to bless him and make him a good boy, like her other sons, and then she asked God to blind Beth Morse's eyes to Tom and his easy smile and his dark handsome face.

But she wasn't sure that even God could do much about that.

Tom could charm Beth as he charmed her—and Beth Morse had waited such a long time for Ithiel.

CHAPTER 2

IT WAS ten weeks later that *December Star* reached swiftly into the outer harbor of New York under a Sandy Hook pilot, and sent signals into her mizzen rigging for a tug. The fussy paddler put the great clipper into her East River berth while both watches swarmed over her, taking off salt-hardened canvas and holystoning sea-bleached decks, and she no sooner touched the land than Ithiel Hempstead stepped ashore and walked quickly to the counting house on Beaver Street with his manifests.

He walked lightly. It had been a good passage—west to California with hide salt, thence light to Foo Chow and home with spice, tea and silk that burdened his ship to her winter marks, in the record time of one hundred and two days. Any shipmaster but Ithiel would have at once taken the packet sloop for home and the girl he could at last ask to marry him.

But Ithiel remained in New York, sending his battered trunks ahead, and only when Mr. Harrington had finally figured the profits in his dusty ledgers did he think of leaving.

"You've cleared the cost of the vessel, sir," the old accountant said with pride, "and still have a pretty sum of profit."

"Do I owe any man, Mr. Harrington?"

"No man, sir—and you've credit for a dozen voyages. Your father would be proud indeed, if I may say so, sir."

"Thank you," Ithiel said softly. "Will you be good enough to get me a berth on this afternoon's sloop for home?"

And so Ithiel, too, came to Asa's old house on India Plain. He lingered to talk with a dozen neighbors and then made his call upon Orena Parker, whose husband John he had lost from the fore ta'gan yard in a wild Cape Stiff williwaw. First things first, Ithiel Hempstead, and all in order and clearly defined like old Harrington's tidy ledgers—and telling poor Orena Parker was a duty to be discharged properly before matters of home and heart.

He left the weeping woman feeling saddened, yet righteous, then gave a cautious copper to a black boy to carry the modest bouquet of New York roses to Beth Morse. After that he took up his own bag and walked the path across the marshes.

He carried voyage gifts, of course. For his mother he brought a thirty-dollar kimono, embroidered in thin gold by a woman of the Emperor's household and to Hanah he gave an ivory cricket cage such as even poor seamen buy in the bazars of the East.

"It's nice," Liza Hempstead said, "though I think the Chinese workmanship has fallen off since your father first traded there. Ithiel, your brother Tom has been home."

"I heard so," Ithiel said and waited.

Liza watched her son narrowly. She expected that Ithiel could tell her what she wanted to know about Tom. But now, with Ithiel's cautious gray eyes blank and waiting, she wasn't sure that she wanted to know. Captain Vibbard, of the clipper *Savage* had avoided her questioning and in a way that had told her as much as his answer might have.

"He brought me a gift," Liza said then. "If your father were alive I wouldn't bother you with these things, Ithiel."

"It's all right, ma," Ithiel said quietly. "What did Tom bring you?"

It was, in a way, a silly question. Ithiel could imagine what Tom's gift would be because he knew what Tom was. Yet he asked the question because he knew it would lead to what he would at last have to tell his mother.

Liza stepped lightly to the mantel and took down Tom's casket of jewels, throwing open the cover so that the candlelight made them burn in deep somber flame.

Ithiel gave them only a glance, running them once through his long fingers.

"They must go back, ma," he told her flatly.

"Of course." Liza nodded. "Tom just disappeared, as he had come, and left them here. I refused them, Ithiel, and Tom did not take them back. Which changes nothing, of course. They are not ours. I think that Captain Vibbard could tell me where to send them but he won't. Ithiel, how did your brother get these gems?"

Ithiel studied the late shadows of the ancient room for a long moment. He was back, for that moment, upon the Pacific leagues, in the rolling yellow of the Balintang Channel where a prudent skipper posted masthead lookouts for strange junks and prayed for steady winds to give him swift motion; where the mate unlocked the magazine and the bosuns cut musket patches under the weather bulwarks. He saw there a dead calm in which a tea clipper wallowed and heard again the slatting of her blocks paced by the *chunk-chunk* of a junk's long sweeps—then the wild barbarous cries of a hundred naked brown men screamed across the seas and Ithiel found his hands creeping to his eyes to shut out the scene.

He had sailed mate on that voyage, but returned as master. Seven of them had died in their own blood on their own decks but the junk had been set afire at last and Ithiel had moved wearily into the master's cabin in the after house and found the monsoon for home. They said it was Dutch Hyderfel's people from the lonely Bashis up Formosa way, but Ithiel knew then that Dutch had been stabbed in a Canton brawl and that another white man had taken his place.

It was a long way from this rich secure room, from the wooden ticking of Asa's old clock which was as steady and honest as the sons for whom it had paced childhood and Ithiel came back with a start.

"Is Tom a master, Ithiel? Has he a ship and a trade?" Liza demanded.

"I guess not, ma."

"I'm not a child, son. Tell me. Tom never fooled me, not in my heart. I want the truth. Is Tom a—a slaver?"

"A man couldn't be today," Ithiel said cautiously. "He'd be brought up quick by a frigate."

"You're avoiding, Ithiel," Liza said in

annoyance. "I always had to protect Tom because he always needed it. But he's a man grown now—a handsome man and I think a dangerous man. Ithiel, is your brother a pirate? Is that it?"

"That's a strong word, ma," Ithiel said. "Give me those jewels. I'll promise to send them back."

Ithiel knew, of course. The whole Pacific knew. Ithiel had fought the war junks again and that was years after he had seen Dutch Hyderfel's severed head raised on a pike beside a Canton quay. Yet the junks attacked the same as always, with order and unity, which is not a yellow man's way but a white man's way, and sometimes their leader would tire of plundering ships and take a raiding fleet clear to Bangkok or the Sundra Settlements for the pure sport of it. Yes—Ithiel knew and Dan'l and Gideon knew and old Captain Vibbard knew, but things like that are not mentioned because such things are accidents and best forgotten.

Ithiel tucked the satinwood case into his carpetbag. He understood why it had to go back, just as he understood why Orena Parker had to be personally told about her poor man's death. A Hempstead had privileges, aye, but he also had duties, and responsibilities and an ancient and good tradition which must not be violated. . . .

Ithiel was undressing in the familiar room under the eaves when the bell cord was yanked. He padded down the stairs, his bare feet curling to the cool oaken boards.

It was the black boy. Silently he handed Ithiel the bouquet of New York roses.

"Massah Morse say tak' 'em back, suh," the boy bleated and backed away.

Ithiel stood there, holding the blooms, feeling the floor of Asa's parlor reel under him like the pitching of a deck in a cross-sea. The fire snapped in its muffling of birch ash and far off he could hear the beat of the black boy's feet on the road under the fulling elms. He stood there a long time, grim-lipped and very still, like a thinking, disciplined man would, with a dream shattered. After a while he became aware of his mother standing beside him, wrapped in the delicate folds of the kimono he had brought her.

"I should have told you, Ithiel," Liza murmured and Ithiel, too, suddenly became again her little boy, needing her heart. "But you were so weary—it seemed sleep would soften my words. Well—it's Tom, Ithiel. He's handsome and brave and charming. I prayed that Beth wouldn't see it. She promised him and waited while Tom sailed on to wherever he lives on this earth and only last week followed him on Captain Rogers' *Cipango* out of New York."

"It was in me to ask Beth this time," Ithiel cried. "All those leagues home I planned, ma—all my life I planned, while I earned my ship and built my credit."

"She waited such a long time for you to speak, Ithiel. Sometimes it's best to put caution and reckoning aside, son, and let your heart speak, for it is the heart that a woman wants most. Tom is rich. Tom is handsome. Beth is a woman full now, Ithiel, and who can blame her?"

But Ithiel stood just there in the dying firelight, thinking his dark angry thoughts and after a while he threw the roses into the ashes and turned tiredly toward the stair to the long attic.

Liza moved quickly in front of him, barring his way with her strong arms. "I see it on you, Ithiel!" she cried. "Don't! Don't carry those jewels to Tom! Send them, Ithiel, just send them!"

"I meant to, ma," Ithiel said quietly and Asa's clock ticked loudly between the words. "I meant to. But now I'll take those jewels to him myself. Let me by, ma. The *December Star* is loading and Tom shall have his jewels back!"

THE Hempstead attic is long and narrow and low and of a May night now very quiet. Only once in a while these days do you hear the soft rustlings of a Hempstead under the duck-feather quilts, or the boyish sighs that even men make when they dream of the world from which Asa's roof shelters them. It is a good place—a place of memories and dreams and forgotten things. Ithiel used to fancy that God, in some mysterious way, dwelt especially there as He dwelt in the shadowy peace of the Meeting House sanctuary. But the Hempsteads do not now stay long in the attic, for the dreams which they dreamed there have become deeds and their peace is of their own making and

always a tall ship waits for them in one of the salt ports of New England.

Ithiel slept in the old attic only one night. On the third day, after a passage through the sound, he was off the packet sloop at Sail Loft Slip, treading lightly the dew-soaked dust of Front Street toward the *December Star.* Mr. Stanhope, his first mate, was already supervising the seacaulking of the midship hatch and the bosun's pipes were crying under the cargo booms.

"Loaded well, I see," Ithiel said, "Mr. Stanhope, make all haste. I'm anxious to be off. You will be taking on some guns—six twelve-pounders and a brace of carronades for the quarters—and some casks of serpentine powder as well. Stow all in the after hold and in such manner that you can readily deck it."

Mr. Stanhope whistled softly, his gray head cocked. "The after hold's for China goods, sir. Then we ain't touchin' at Frisco?"

"We are touching at Frisco," Ithiel said, "and I want a record passage, Mr. Stanhope. I want to be there before the *Cipango,* Captain Rogers, which vessel sailed within the week I should say. We will not break cargo from the after hold until we reach Canton."

"Aye, sir." Stanhope grinned knowingly and tamped his iron pipe with a rope-scarred thumb. "But we'll be liftin' those guns on deck afore we break Canton cargo, eh, sir? I own to nimble wits, if I may say so, sir. Now would you be sailing the Balintang Channel too, Captain? It's high time them yaller devils was cleaned out."

Ithiel glared. "Your wits need overhauling, Mr. Stanhope and you ask too many questions. Now proceed with the loading."

"Aye, aye, sir!" the mate boomed cheerily. "I reckon I got my answer howsomever. Hist, sir—I know an agent what can ship us a few gunners, able old navy men which was left on the beach by Congress' laloop-headed maritime policies, sir."

"Sign them on," Ithiel said curtly.

Then he strode aft to his cabin and locked Tom's case of jewels in the iron-bound safe under his writing desk. On the wharf, outside his sea shutters, the drayer's carts were lined nose to tailboard to his loading booms and the lacy shadows of his own bowspirt rigging lay patterned upon the endless chain of cased goods for Frisco and Canton. Ithiel looked upon them with calculation. Here were profits, here was wealth—and of the kind a man could understand and be proud of. All of it did not approach the value of Tom's small case of gems, but Ithiel gave that no thought. There was a difference—a difference which no man had ever pointed out to him but one which he instinctively and deeply sensed and knew was right.

Toward the end of the afternoon he called at the counting house, already in his sea clothes. It had changed little since the days of Increase, who was the first of the Hempsteads to trade foreign, and old Harrington, like the rosewood desks and the dusty shipmodels and the yellowed charts on the flaking walls, was on his accustomed stool before his ledgers.

"My affairs are in good order, I take it?" Ithiel inquired.

"As always. Voyage insurance commenced at noon, sir." Mr. Harrington nodded over the litter of bundled cargo bills. "Er—there's talk that you are going to take the Balintang Channel into the China coast, sir. May I suggest that you pick up a British cruiser for company, sir?"

Ithiel drummed his fingers in annoyance. "Mr. Stanhope talks too much, Mr. Harrington. Please advise him so and dock him a fortnight's pay, so that he'll remember. You have the week's sailing advices? Has ought been reported of the *Cipango?*"

Harrington shuffled his spiked reports. "Cleared just seven days ago this tide, sir. She is for Frisco and return. I can tell you her cargo if you wish?"

"Thank you, no. But I am interested in her passenger list."

Mr. Harrington coughed. "Ordinarily I would not file the passenger list. However—er—I thought in this case—that is, sir, Miss Beth Morse and her Aunt Keene Morse are—well, they're on board, sir."

Ithiel offered his hand in farewell. It was difficult for him to unbend even this much. All his life he had been aware of the gap between skipper and crew, between shipmaster and employee, and he had never felt even a curiosity about bridging that gap. He stood on his side of the gap by right of birth and remained there because of

fair deeds and upright dealing—because a family tradition and a family honor older than he kept him there. A man had to guard those heritages and keep them pure and carefully build his own personal and public life upon them . . . And you did not often shake the hand of a family servant. Nevertheless, as he pressed old Harrington's blue-veined hand, he felt a sudden deep warmth within him — almost a kinship, pleasing and satisfying, like he sometimes felt when his mother's Hanah remembered for him some intimate incident of childhood.

"She's rightly yours, Ithiel," old Harrington said softly. "Make a good fight of it, sir."

Ithiel held the faithful old hand, his gray eyes in the murky cobwebs of the counting house for a long moment.

"You misunderstand," Ithiel said slowly. "Beth Morse belongs to whomever she promised, Harrington. She cannot be fought for like battle plunder. I've an errand to do and she fits into my plans, that's all."

For a fleeting moment Ithiel had seen in those ancient shadows the real freedom which is the right of all men. To pursue and take, to act in heedless resolution and passion as no Hempstead had ever before acted—except Tom, of course, free, unfettered Tom. For that brief moment he had almost felt envy for his brother. But he quickly put away these strange thoughts and slipped gratefully into the pattern which three generations had proved safe and right and honorable and the dream was gone.

The *December Star* towed with the tide to The Narrows beyond the forts and set her jibs and top-s'ls in the purple evening as the sun slid into the New Jersey marshes. Ithiel paced his lonely few fathoms of quarterdeck and watched the orderly organization of his ship for sea. Stanhope named his watches well—there would be double rum dots for the helmsman who could log off a full watch at twelve knots, and triple for the man who first sighted a big two-spankered clipper named *Cipango*.

"Now dress her up, Mr. Hazard," Stanhope boomed to the second. "We'll fly all save stunsi'ls. The skipper wants Frisco in a hundred days."

"God willing," murmured Mr. Hazard.

"Master Hempstead willing, mister!" Stanhope barked. "Lay to it. I've got orders to drive her, bucko."

NOW you might very easily be persuaded that Ithiel Hempstead was a foolish man indeed to contemplate sailing into Tom's station in the Bashi Reefs with six guns and a stubborn conception of honor. As you can imagine, Tom Hempstead was no more fool than any of his breed. His business was grounded in a sure and swift attack but he was not careless of his defenses. They said, on the China coast, that he could call half a thousand slant-eyed yellow islanders with one blast of the conch which swung in the lazy reef breezes from his veranda, and that ten junks could hoist sound bamboo lateens at the command of Tom's captains and be off to harass a stranger. When a ship ran the Balintang Channel to save a few days to Amoy or Wampoa or Canton she was careful to do so on a full-and-bye breeze, and the skipper kept his Bible open on the chart table so that God would not retract that breeze. It was always a gamble. A man needed wind to maneuver and bring his guns to bear, for Tom fought his junks in the pirate manner, which is to close from the bows and quarters and then board.

Ithiel knew all this and he knew that deadly calms prevailed over the Bashi Reefs a good part of the year. There was a horrible bloody death in these calms, paced by the crazy savage screams of brown men and the smooth swish of long beheading swords and the ragged rattle of firecrackers thrown to the bare-bellied Prince of Battle whose baleful eye peered from the nether bow of each junk. Six twelve-pounders and a New England conscience were hardly sufficient caution—which was why Ithiel smiled thinly some months later when the Hempstead factor at San Francisco informed him that the *Cipango* had not yet entered the roadstead.

It had been a hard voyage—head gales below the Horn, for it was full winter there, and a bitter fight of handing and reefing to the Trades at South Forty; then a glorious run with save-alls and moonrakers set night and day for thirty-six days to the gateway hills of Frisco. But no man had earned triple rum dots. The *Cipango* had not been raised the long voyage.

"I meant to beat her," Ithiel told his factor with satisfaction. "There will be two female passengers on board her who will want to transship to the China coast. Will you be good enough to give them accommodations on my vessel?"

"Nothing in the roads for the coast just now," the agent said. "It's the *December Star* or nothing. Am I to charge passage, sir?"

"Certainly." Ithiel nodded bitterly. "Did I say they were ought but passengers?"

He learned in that week before the *Cipango* cleared the headlands that Tom had gone through Frisco two months before, taking a vessel for Manila. Ithiel supposed that one of his junks would meet him there. When the pilot gun finally sounded and Mr. Stanhope came a'rapping at his skylight, Ithiel climbed quickly to the mizzen shear-pole. He put his telescope on the ship briefly, then snapped it shut almost savagely.

"Have a cabin cleared for two lady passengers, Mr. Stanhope," he ordered briskly. "And you may fetch those guns on deck now, Mister."

As you understand the significance of these preparations, you can see that Ithiel Hempstead was no fool at all. Hempsteads before him had burned powder on the decks of a merchantman for the sake of their beliefs and traditions. Ithiel simply had a necessary matter of honor to attend to and he set carefully about doing it. It never occurred to him to avoid the matter, which would have been the way of an ordinary man, nor even to inquire into the practical need for his attentions. The ghosts and memories of that long quiet attic were etched deeply into his soul—and the dreams that he dreamed there must have been also, because Ithiel almost visibly flinched when Beth Morse stepped to his immaculate decks from the soaring bosun's chair, her skirts aflutter and her hair in wispy breeze-stranded golden threads about her face.

Those long-ago dreams again lived in Ithiel and he felt his heart beat quickly as he bowed. Beth was even more beautiful than he remembered her. She was a woman grown now, fulsome and rounded and provocative and in her eyes lay a deep sureness and awareness of her powers. Ithiel again felt sudden sharp envy for Tom, a quick shocking pagan desire to throw off the shackles that made him as he was and be like Tom.

"I mean to take you to Tom," Ithiel said stiffly. "My course lies within a league of his plantation and I have an errand there. Beth, I wish you happiness."

Beth Morse pursed her full lips, studying the straight grim-lipped man who used to make his shy, embarrassed calls upon her as she grew from girlhood.

"I'm sure that's from your heart, Ithiel," Beth Morse said and its bitterness was lost on Ithiel because he was thinking then what it might do to a man and his self-respect to take Beth in his arms and fiercely kiss her warm red lips and order sail made for home. "I have heard some stories from Captain Rogers about your brother. They are not nice stories, Ithiel. What is there to them?"

"I don't know what you heard," Ithiel said and suddenly Tom's image stood between them again. "Nor does it matter."

"Does it not matter, Ithiel?" Beth asked softly.

"No!" Ithiel rasped, "You gave Tom your promise."

"And I could not take it back?"

"Most certainly you could not! It is for Tom to give it back if he wishes, not for you to take, Beth. A cautious woman would have made inquiries before."

"Cautious!" Beth snapped and drew her sea cape to her throat. "Can a woman's heart know caution when a man like Tom Hempstead asks for it? Caution! Your life is a great miserable caution, Ithiel—prudence here and caution there and never a thing to comfort you but your stupid cold Puritan conscience. Cherish it, fondle it! Ithiel, why don't you move into this world and live?"

Ithiel could have answered her, of course, for what he was and what he believed were living forces within him but he merely made a clumsy, red-faced bow

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and snarled at Stanhope, "Get sail on her, mister. Pipe your anchor watch. D'you think I want to lie here forever?"

CHAPTER 3

ITHIEL sailed the *December Star* into the Balintang Channel full-and-bye, as a lucky skipper would hope to. Off Bashi he set a man in the chains with the blue pigeon, for the water was shoaling near the reefs, and ordered the ship put in for the unseen land beneath the fleecy banked trade wind clouds to north'ard. Under shortened sail, because the reef channels twisted and turned here, he closed with the atoll on which Tom's station was.

The six guns were mounted now and a carronade swiveled above each tuck of the quarter rail. The ball was racked on the hatches and a bosun stood over the small arms chest with orders. Mr. Stanhope's gunners were quarrelsome and touchy because they say a gunner can smell a fight two weeks off and the skipper had so far given them no battle plan. But still Ithiel paced his weather deck.

He had better protection than gunfire.

He saw the junks with the cry of the lookout. They lunged from under the palm fringe of Bishu, their reed sails stiff to the wind and the yellow men thick in the grass rigging. Ithiel held his glass to the fleet, studying the canted decks, but, of course, he did not see Tom in this bloody business. Ithiel's flags were threaded and taut on their crowjack halyard and he found himself suddenly praying that at least one of the heathen masters could read them.

He counted heavily on the message of his flag hoist. Nevertheless, he curtly ordered the gun matches lighted. No wisdom in leaving all to chance. Caution. . . .

"The man who fires without command will swing by the thumbs from the main yard!" he called. "Mr. Stanhope, where are the ladies?"

"Why, right here on deck, sir," the mate croaked and looked startled.

Ithiel had not been aware of Beth. She stood a'weather, the wind pressing her sea cape into her rounded body, facing Tom's station now visible on the low, jungle-bound shore beyond the broad lagoon.

"They're Tom's junks, aren't they?" she asked and Ithiel nodded. "Then those stories are true! Ithiel, how could you bring me here?"

"Tom has your promise," Ithiel said, "Does that mean nothing to you, Beth?"

"Oh, Ithiel, you great fool!" Beth cried. "Can nothing change? Would you die, would you kill, for that miserable conscience of yours? Yes—take me to Tom, Ithiel. Oh, take me to Tom so that the noble Hempsteads may sleep in their eternal graves in peace!"

Now no man will ever know if Ithiel was then aware of what Beth's angry words could have meant. Even if he had known and remembered their long intimate talks as the *December Star* rolled across the Pacific—even if he had remembered these and the yielding contrite softness of her as she whispered goodnight at her cabin door, and his own yearning dreams—no man could say what he would have done about them. A strange man, Ithiel Hempstead, of a strange breed with its own notions of honor and rightness and justice.

The war junks came swiftly on, four of them, on clumsy wooden strings like heavy fish-gorged pelicans, the unwinking eyes bright and purposeful and evil on their bows. The firecrackers were already snapping, like the bark of a terrier, and the sun was glinting on the cruel curves of the swords and the long keen lanceheads.

"Give me leave to rake 'em, sir!" Mr. Stanhope begged, the sweat beady and hot in his gray hair. "We've wind to maneuver, so they can't board. Only four, sir—an' if they come that way I can lick the whole fleet. Say the word, sir."

"Hold your fire, Mister," Ithiel snapped. "Do you wish to stretch beneath the main-yard? See—they veer! Our flag hoist has been read."

The leading junk suddenly let sheets fly and with her steering oar pressing hard into naked yellow bellies, stood luffing, calling her sisters to her. Ithiel waited, breathing hard, the smoke of the gun matches still acrid in his mouth. The junks retreated, then hove to a quarter league upwind and Ithiel knew the next move was up to him.

"Ready my gig, Mr. Stanhope," Ithiel called sharply then. "I wish to go ashore."

"Ashore, sir!"

"I speak plain English, Mr. Stanhope. The ladies will remain on board. Let no heathen on my decks and keep your matches lighted. If you are attacked, sail away, Mister. Now see to my boat."

The junks were standing off and on to windward, their sails slatting noisily, the firecrackers stilled. Ithiel went to the cabin safe, then stepped lightly across the midship deck and into his gig. In silence the boat watch under Mr. Hazard pulled him through Tom's fleet toward the low broad house on the atoll.

"Mind well the channel, Mr. Hazard," Ithiel said once. "No honest ship has ever sailed it. I take it to be the station's chief defense."

"Aye, sir," Hazard grunted from the yoke at the sternsheets, "Narrow but deep —and passable for a ship, sir."

Ithiel saw his brother Tom before the boat touched the shell shore—Tom a'running down the shingle as if the greatest joy in the world were coming to him. Ithiel stepped to the land, his brother's jewel case clutched tightly under his arm and now Tom's grin was broad and boyish and there was genuine pleasure in his hail.

"Ithiel, my brother!"

"Don't be a fool, Tom," Ithiel said coldly and avoided the ready hand which Tom had offered. "I've a chore here—then I'll be quickly gone."

"Come up to the house, Ithiel," Tom cried. "It's of teak and you will want to tell mother about it. I've the furnishings of a Manchu and tonight we shall banquet with my captains like princes of the Empire. You've made me so happy, Ithiel—"

"Stop your chattering!" Ithiel snarled at him. "My business is brief—and mother will not wish to know about your house. She sees you as you are at last, Tom, and I came across the world to tell you what she would wish me to tell you. You are no longer of our family, Tom. We disown you and disavow you and pray that you will be driven from your foul calling and into oblivion. Do not use our name, Tom. You are not a Hempstead and I mean to so tell the world! To us you are already dead, Tom, and may God have mercy on your soul."

Tom's arrogant black eyes narrowed, his hurt strong on his suddenly white face. "Mother never said that," he said softly. "Do you forget that this is my atoll, that I am king here? You used to be a cautious man, Ithiel."

"I still am," Ithiel stated flatly. "I have Beth Morse on board as you no doubt read by my signals and saw through your glass. My mate has orders to sail at the first hostile action. Make a move against me if you dare, Tom. Now take back these jewels. You should have had better sense than to give such ill-gotten treasure to a Hempstead. But you were always different —heedless of your blood and reckless of your good name and I mind who used to steal the lobsters and lie to father when we were boys. Tom, if I ever see you again, it will be over the sights of my guns and I shall blow you from the face of the earth."

TOM HEMPSTEAD stood there in his bright little kingdom, looking helplessly about, like a child hurt and accused. He was, then, the little Tom whom Liza used to comfort, forgetting his misdeeds and concerned only in the flesh that was her flesh and the wounded heart that was her own. But Ithiel felt no such sympathy. His distaste stood strong on his set hard jaws and he motioned Mr. Hazard to move the gig in.

"Your way and my way, the East and the West." Tom shrugged. "You were ever a stickler, Ithiel. Oh, well—you'll send Beth ashore?"

"Not I. You'll come off in your boat for her. You'd have your junks upon me the moment I set Beth on your beach."

"I would," Tom agreed easily. "You must be richly burdened and likely have the Frisco agent's specie in your safe. You see—" Tom grinned arrogantly— "I have my code and my duties, too. But damned if I'd ever sail to Stonington and impose them upon you."

Ithiel was stepping into the waiting gig, Mr. Hazard's blades at the toss when Tom's voice cut into the order for the stroke. Tom leaned over and spoke softly.

"Ithiel, tell me one thing. What you think about me is true—but as God is my witness, I would not hurt Beth Morse. Tell me—does she love me or is it still you?"

Ithiel pondered the question. Aye, whom did Beth love? And by what right could

these two brothers settle the question? "Only Beth can answer you that," Ithiel said. "And of what use would be her answer if I did know it? It was to you she gave her promise. Oars, Mr. Hazard, please, oars and stroke, Mister."

Ithiel was in his cabin when Tom's boat crept under the starboard ladder. He could hear Beth and her Aunt Keene packing their trunks in the cabin across the ward room, then the heavy step of Mr. Stanhope on the companion stair. Ithiel opened his door, having no wish to go on deck for hurting farewells.

"Tell my brother to send his junks to moorings in his lagoon, Mr. Stanhope," he said. "When they are there you may hand Miss Morse and her aunt into his boat—not before!"

"The junks are still by us, sir," Stanhope said, his hope still eager on his weathered face. "I could sink 'em like shootin' harbor gulls, I vow! Captain—"

"You have your orders, Mister," Ithiel snapped. "Turn to and have the trunks put on deck."

The quick twilight crept into his open stern ports, seeping into the cluttered cabin like a warm mist. He could feel the *December Star* heel as she stood gently off and on under short sail, unwilling to surrender the advantages of motion. The velvet night shut softly down and suddenly Ithiel heard Beth's footsteps padding quickly on the stair to the deck. Aye, it was best so—first things first and let each man guard his honor and his word, for without them there is death.

But even then, after Ithiel had closed his ports, so as not to hear the dipping of Tom's sweeps, there came a small rap on the door and Beth's Aunt Keene stood facing him in the gloom. She had the eyes of Beth and the pride of her, too, but her voice was brittle and angry now.

"What manner of a man are you, Captain Hempstead?" she demanded. "Are you blind? Have you no heart?"

"Ma'm—" Ithiel stammered.

"Don't ma'm me! Beth is as stubborn as you—but I thank God for quite a different reason, sir! Can't you see she loves you, Captain? Can't you understand a mistake in judgment? Why don't you fight these heathens and take what is already yours? And if you are afraid to fight, sail out as you sailed in—under Beth's own petticoats! For that's all your signal flags were, sir! How can you prattle of honor and promises made, yet stoop to a trick like that?"

"The device was necessary, ma'm," Ithiel said firmly. "It was justified by the greater need which brought both Beth and me here."

"Tra-la! To salve a conscience a hundred years outmoded? To surrender what is yours because a renegade brother had charmed a promise from a lonely girl? Fiddle-de-dee, sir! Beth Morse is flesh and laughter and love, incautious and heart-ruled and generous and selfish and your pale blue Hempstead blood could well prosper with a dash of these common human spices. Aye—I'm glad for her it's Tom, sir, for I see you intend to do nothing about it."

Ithiel bowed, his lips drawn tightly over his set jaws.

"The boat is waiting, ma'm, and I'm anxious to be off to sea. Mr. Stanhope!" he called. "Mr. Stanhope, cast off the boat and square away for the China Sea."

NOW it takes some tall figuring to tally the years which have bloomed and withered since that night and in that time the Hempsteads have changed. They laugh often now and they love boldly and a man could call them well-seasoned with the common human spices. But who can say that it is they who have changed? Perhaps it is only that the times have changed and the world become smaller, so that men fall into patterns more readily than they did in Ithiel's day. But you will still find souls as stout as old Asa's—you will still find that sturdy adherence to personal honor and integrity and that code which has never been written down. And behind it, as then, you will find the imagination and resourcefulness and deliberate purpose that musty history does not stress, so preoccupied is it with drawing superficial comparisons between the ages.

Ithiel sailed into the China Sea that long-ago night, for a full deliberate hour, before he slipped into his sea boots and climbed resolutely to the canted deck of his driving ship. His mind was keen and alert and at last that conscience of his was

clear and unfettered. He posted the night slate on its wooden pin on the after side of the binnacle and crossed lightly to the lee quarterdeck, where Mr. Stanhope stood his silent watch.

But for all that was in him, he did not speak first. The sea, too, had its ancient traditions and it was Mr. Stanhope's place to break silence.

"Lights are burning bright, sir, and all's well," the mate said. "That is, sir—well, some of the men, the gunners mostly, are grumbling. They have it in mind that you could have blown that pirate's station to flinders by a nod of your head, sir. I took their rum away for a few watches to learn 'em respect, sir."

Ithiel rocked on his heels, his hands clasped behind him, his head cocked toward the weaving, sinuous tracery of slack lee rigging.

"Give them their rum back, Mr. Stanhope," Ithiel said. "How should they know what compels a man to visit strange shores? What do they know of things to be done first, and things to follow? There were obligations to be discharged, Mr. Stanhope, and promises to be kept—and only when the slate is clean may a man again write upon it and act freely. We must be able to live with ourselves—we must abide by what we are and what we believe in. But the slate is clean, Mr. Stanhope. I bid you look at what I have posted. It has been written for days and now I am free to act, for I owe no man. Read the night slate, Mister—then put this ship back for the Bashi Reefs and pipe your eager gunners!"

It was all upon the slate, in Ithiel's neat, tight scrawl, and Mr. Stanhope chuckled aloud when he read the order of attack. They tumbled out joyously when the pipes squealed and wore ship in the sighing night breeze, their blue lanterns dim beneath the gasketed tubs and the twelve-pounders already loaded with murderous chain and cannister.

"Douse all lights! Make quiet the ship!" Ithiel barked. "Keep us moving always, Mr. Stanhope. There is sailing room aplenty in the lagoon where lay the junks and Mr. Hazard knows the channel to it. Ready the long boats, mister, and stow in them your sperm and torches for I mean to burn this station from the face of the earth and take back what is now mine to take."

He growled at the cheer which rose from the decks, for the outer crowns of the Bashi Reef were snarling abeam and sound carries far on a night wind. The junks had seen him sail into the sunset; they would not be expecting him. Tom would be banqueting his captains in his low house.

Yet a man must be cautious. . . .

"There's a stone house on the jungle

T&NO JUNCTION

BUSIEST rail intersection near the growing "Wonder City" of Houston, Texas is T&NO JUNCTION where heavily travelled T&NO and GC&SF lines cross. The tower at that point is a grand place to take pictures of activity on the high iron, as RAILROAD contributor Philip R. Hastings found when he arrived with his camera.

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edge, Mr. Hazard," Ithiel said. "You observed it? Let no man destroy it. Tell your gunners and torch bearers that, Mister."

They furled the courses so the smoke of gunfire would better scavenge, and set lower topgallants over double topsi'ls, and jibs and spanker, of course, for a man would want the handiness of a schooner tonight. Hazard chanted the depths to the chunk of his pigeon and Ithiel himself spoked the elm wheel, and so the *December Star* crept silently through the channel into Tom Hempstead's atoll station.

"Like shootin' settin' gulls, sir," Stanhope chuckled when the junks stood dimly against the night, their paper lanterns dancing as the vessels rolled in the lagoon tide.

"Mind they don't fly," Ithiel cautioned. "Bring us up for a raking broadside, Mister—then you may open fire."

As you can imagine, it was a complete surprise, and very shortly a complete rout for even white men cannot put battle discipline into yellow men. The gunners worked their hot pieces, as in their frigate days, pouring flailing chain into the grass rigging and scattering cannister into the tight midships where yellow men brandished futile lances and screamed to their pagan gods.

Five junks were aflame and sinking before Ithiel's ship rounded from her first onslaught.

From the high, verandaed house the conch was bleating and a single toy cannon was spewing pathetic chunks of coquina rock into the empty night.

"Again!" Ithiel cried. "See, the fire spreads. Only heathen fools would moor as close as a basket of puppies. Now, Mister, make good your small arms fire. Shoot them where they swim—chop off the pagan arms which reach my rail! Well done—that's for seven shipmates who died in the bloody Balintang on another day. Now, Mr. Stanhope, let's have red hot shot in your for'ard pieces and see to the last of those junks."

There are no captain's squires to keep battle record as there is on a man-of-war, and so a merchantman must judge its battle by the results. But even then it is difficult because a man does not always know what it was like before and swift flame on tropical wood and the coughs of dying men destroy the very quantities of the accounting. It was so with Tom's station.

It was there—then it was gone. Some time during that half hour of carnage, Ithiel turned his guns on the teak house and, when it was shivered and wracked, sent Mr. Stanhope to ready the boats.

They went in, in the three boats with their armed crews, and landed on the shingle beach and crawled in open order towards Tom's house. Beyond it the jungle was loud with the crashing of running, falling men.

"Put your torch to it, Mr. Hazard," Ithiel ordered. "But stay well out of the jungle—that's not a place for seamen."

They fanned out, spitting their heavy musket fire into the moving shadows, laughing at the inspid bark of the few pistols, yet cursing respectfully at the thrown spears. A seaman clutched his throat and pitched upon a staining shaft and Ithiel, skirting the wing of an outhouse, felt the cutting wind of a long sword before his bullet sprawled a fang-toothed man into a tide pool.

The lagoon was filled with the booming of the twelve pounders, licking scarlet tongues against the redness which swirled from the burning junks and the sharks were already splashing and sucking on the stained polluted waters.

The mate brought Tom Hempstead up to Ithiel at pistol point. Tom was dirty and torn, a bloody swatch bound around his thigh, but the black eyes were still arrogant and keen.

"You win, Ithiel—" Tom shrugged lightly— "as I knew one of us some day would. My yellow pets are simpletons against planned gunfire and you surely did catch me off guard. Well—what shall I give you, Ithiel? I have gold, silver, the jewels of rajahs—"

"You can give me nothing!" Ithiel barked. "I came to take. Where is Beth Morse?"

"Why, safe and sound!" Tom laughed softly. "I lack your excellent qualities, brother, but never gallantry. She's in the stone house yonder—and you may have her, Ithiel. I planned to ship her for home, for Beth does not love me—as any man but you would have told me this afternoon. No, Beth Morse was always yours and I re-

lease her from her promise. Now must your narrow soul be at peace, Ithiel," Tom purred, "for that's the way we Hempsteads must live our lives, all neatly entered, as in Harrington's musty ledgers, with honor and right and old Asa's holy memory correctly balanced against the fire which burns a man when he loves a woman! Aye, Ithiel, your way may be right but I advise you to kiss Beth Morse soundly and to hell with consequences! Now you may shoot me, Ithiel. Was there not some noble vow to blast me from the face of the earth?"

Tom stood there smiling at his brother, the drip of his wound ticking off the seconds in the cool sand. They stood there, these two Hempsteads, and who can say who was right and who was wrong? Each lived life as he saw it and a stranger might well ask if the blood of a pirate is really darker than the blood of a puritan.

"Go away, Tom," Ithiel said then and belted his pistol. "Go into the jungle to the yellow men who understand you. But first I shall take that satinwood case of jewels, Tom."

Tom laughed again but you could tell that his wound was bad because the laugh lacked that quality which was Tom's very heartblood.

"Buried beneath my doorstone," he said. "I give you all that is there, Ithiel, for I shall not be needing it."

"No, Tom," Ithiel said. "Only the jewels. And you understand that you are not giving them to me. I returned them and now I am taking them—with sweat and risk and danger, Tom. There's a difference and mother will understand."

"Will she now, Ithiel Hempstead?" Tom laughed dully.

And who can say? The ancient family records show that Liza Hempstead did receive those jewels from Ithiel and her personal diary is stained and yellow.

But who can say that her heart knew the difference? Who can say that her heart did not walk out into the jungle that night, while Ithiel threw open the door of the stone house and took what was now his, and there receive those jewels again from Tom while his blood ticked off the seconds in the cool sand?

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"Chugach," he called again. "Here, boy!"

JIM McLEOD had been in tight spots before, but never one that closed around him with such relentless finality as this. This time fate had really stacked the deck. Gritting his teeth, dragging his fiery, swollen right leg, he crawled an agonizing ten feet to lay another stick on the fire which stood between him and death—the fire and one cartridge in the chamber of the .30-'06.

He had shot away all the rest. It was a crazy thing to do, but a man doesn't want to die without a fight—not when he's thirty-five, bull-strong and tough as a mountain ash. Not when he has a fortune in his pack. So, lying on his back with the sweat standing out on his forehead, he had blazed away into the spruce tops —*bam . . . bam . . . bam,* like that—pausing after each three shots to listen. Maybe

LAST CARTRIDGE

By
TED JANES

It was just a hunk of lead, yet more priceless than wealth—as great as man's final love. . . .

some trapper or prospector, maybe even Hank might hear the shots and come. But the explosions ran together in mocking reverberations and nothing was left but the forlorn sigh of wind through a thousand miles of spruce. That had been two days ago. Since then he had lain by the fire, chilled and feverish by turns, leaving it only on short, pain-wracked excursions after firewood.

His dog, Chugach, came bounding back from a futile chase after a rabbit and thrust his sharp muzzle questingly into Jim's face. Reassured, he sat down with a contented sigh while Jim twisted thick fingers in his curly brown coat and tugged at his wide, floppy ears. You couldn't rightly say what kind of dog Chugach was; no one could hope to trace his haphazard lineage. He was just—Chugach, asking

nothing of life but to share it with his master. And he was sharing it now, even to the end. Jim's fingers clenched the dog's ruff in sudden frenzy.

"Go, Chugach!" he shouted harshly, "Go find Hank. Go, damn you!"

But Chugach sat, head cocked to one side, his brown eyes staring yearningly into his master's gray ones, and Jim pulled him roughly down beside him.

"You don't know anything," he said, thumping the dog's bony shoulders. "You ornery old son of a mangy wolverene."

Chugach panted happily and bumped his long tail on the ground.

"You're prob'ly the most useless critter in the world," Jim added gently. "You can't pull sled—you don't know any tricks. You can't even fight very good, although you've never found that out."

Chugach yawned blissfully, curled up beside his master and went to sleep. Dogs are real philosophers. This little cuss must be as starved as . . . as Jim himself, but there wasn't any grub—so Chugach went to sleep.

Jim wished he could go to sleep, too. Sleep would blot out the stabbing pain of that throbbing leg and the torturing thirst. Best of all, it would put an end, for a while at least, to the worst pangs of all—the growing realization that this was it. Finish. The end.

He wasn't kidding himself any longer. It had been two days now—two days with only a chunk of spruce grouse to eat, two days of burning fever and rotting cold without help for his mangled leg. Hank had left by now, taking off from the wind-swept reaches of Caribou Lake and Hank was his link with civilization, his last hope of seeing the settlements again. By the time Hank came back, searching for him, he'd find . . . maybe nothing after the foxes and the crows got through. A little tortured sound escaped his clenched teeth and Chugach stirred restlessly in his sleep.

JIM'S eyes strayed to the .30-'06 lying beside him. Slowly, his hand moved toward it, then drew back. You didn't do it that way—you kept on fighting till they knocked you down for the count. Save that last cartridge for food. Maybe someone . . . maybe something . . . maybe. . . .

Wearily he dragged himself, hatchet in hand, to the downed tree for another stick of wood.

Back at the fire he lay panting, watching gray clouds drive across patches of spruce-etched sky. There was wind in those clouds—and rain. Somewhere, lost in their infinite space, Hank droned south toward the settlements along the river. That was the agreement he'd made with the bush pilot a month ago on the shore at Caribou Lake.

"If I'm not here October first, don't wait," Jim said. "Come back the fifteenth."

Hank eyed the dark spruce that crouched about the lake and stretched away unbroken to the barren lands of the Arctic.

"Six weeks alone in this wilderness," he said, shaking his head, "and I'd go bush-happy—like the guy that shot the squaw over on Sachigo."

Jim grinned. This wasn't a wilderness; this was home. The settlements were just some place he went now and then to outfit, to have a few drinks, to spend his money on amiable dark-eyed girls—to shoot the works. He always looked forward to going there; sometimes he thought he'd stay, but always he tired of it after a while. But he couldn't explain it to Hank—he couldn't describe the fever that gets into a man's blood, urging him on and on with a pack on his back, looking for fur or for rocks, and not so much in the hope of finding them as just for the excitement of looking.

"I'm not alone," he said. "I've got Chugach. And I'll take my life to yours any day—bush-hopping from Fort Hope to Sachigo in all kinds of weather."

"That's different," Hank said. "I'm heading for Weagamow now to fly out a sick Indian, but tonight I'll be back at the river, sitting in Steve's with a blonde."

"Give 'em my best,' Jim said, "and tell 'em I'll see 'em next month."

He helped Hank turn the light plane around on its floats and stood waving as it skimmed across the lake. He watched it roar overhead and dwindle away, a tiny insect buzzing out of sight over the oceans of spruce. Then he shrugged into his bulky pack and picked up his rifle.

"Come on, Chugach," he said. "We're off to the races again."

And this time he'd hit it. He read his

fortune in the click of the geiger counter, chattering over uranium beds imprisoned in craggy ledges uncounted aeons ago. Back in the government offices, they'd run a bead test, but even before that he knew he'd struck it rich. Nights he sat in the peeled spruce cabin beside the fire—for the northern nights were already cold—telling Chugach of their fortune.

"We'll have a big house outside, Chugach," he said, tamping his pipe with his thumb. "Sleep in a different room every night. Champagne by the gallon. And for you, Chugach, a big collar studded with gold."

Chugach's tail thudded a pleased tattoo and Jim laughed. Chugach who had never worn a collar. And he an old bush-runner who had never lived in more than a single-room cabin. He knew he was kidding and Chugach knew it, too.

"Don't you, boy?" he said, whacking the dog's sturdy back. "It won't make any difference, really. We'll still be roaming the bush, sleeping under spruce and eating when we can. But it'll be nice to know we've got it, stashed away someplace, if we need it."

And so the month went by—thirty days, thirty black marks scrawled with a stub of crayon on a board above his bunk. Early on the morning of the last day, he put out his fire, barricaded the cabin against marauding bears and porcupines and shouldered his pack for the twenty-five mile trip to the lake. The pack was heavier this time, dragging at the tump line with the added weight of a dozen fist-sized chunks of pitchblende.

But his heart was light and the miles disappeared beneath his moccasins. Twenty-five miles was nothing between sun-up and dark. In mid-morning he shot a fool hen out of a tree, severing its head with a bullet from the .30-'06—camp meat for tonight while he waited beside the lake for morning and Hank.

He stopped at noon for a mug-up with the cabin fourteen miles behind him. When the last chunk of bannock had disappeared and only the crumbs remained for the whiskey jacks, Chugach wandered into the forest, hunting. Jim sprawled against a tree, pipe in his teeth. Tomorrow he'd be at the river, leaning back in his chair at Steve's, a good dinner under his belt, the clink of glasses, laughter and maybe more. . . .

Chugach's sharp bark, shrill with excitement, echoed among the trees. Cursing, Jim scrambled to his feet and ran toward the sound. That bark meant trouble—Chugach would tackle a moose if he could catch it. This time, though, it was a porcupine, rolled into a bristly ball at the base of a big spruce, blinking stupidly at the frenzied, barking dog. Jim charged in, shouting, and snatched Chugach up by the scruff of the neck.

"Won't you ever learn!" he roared, tossing the dog through the air. "Haven't I yanked enough quills out of your mangy hide?"

He held the straining dog while the porky slowly unwound and lumbered into the low branches of the tree.

"Now, behave yourself," Jim said gruffly, "if you want to wear that gold collar."

It was in the late afternoon, just a few miles from the lake, that it happened, as he clambered down a moss-grown ledge—a loose rock that rolled beneath his moccasin, a jolting fall and a stabbing, crunching pain that made him cry out as lights zigzagged before his eyes. His leg lay twisted grotesquely under him and he knew that it was broken.

For a little while there was numbness, then the pain came back, knife-sharp, throbbing against the tight binding of his trouser leg. He slit the blood-caked cloth and saw the jagged end of bone thrust through swollen black flesh. It was then, sickened, that he lay back and fired his cartridges into the tree tops. And this was the end of the trail, criss-crossing the wilderness for thirty odd years to lead at last to this spot marked by a mouldy pack and a rusted rifle.

THE rain began gently with big drops sifting down between the spruces, splashing upon his upturned face. It grew in intensity, threshing upon the spruce needles, leaking through in little rivulets. It hissed in the fire and sent up puffs of steam, turning the glowing embers to glistening black coals, but Jim didn't care any more. He lay with his mouth open, catching the rain in his hands, sucking it greedily, feel-

ing it bathe his hot, dry face, Chugach pressed closer, nestling his muzzle under his master's body. Jim spread his coat protectingly over the thin back and so they lay while gusts of wind swayed the trees and the rain drummed down in an opaque gray curtain, drowning the earth. Late in the day it ended and in the stillness he could hear the harsh scream of bluejays far in the forest. Chugach stood up and shook himself and wandered slowly into the dripping woods to look for a rabbit.

Or something else. . . .

The icy water had cooled Jim's fever and revived him, even while it sealed his fate. Chilled to the bone, his fire out, his matches soaked, food gone—maybe now it was time for that last cartridge. But in his heart still flickered the stubborn spark that makes a man fight on when all hope is gone. And that solitary cartridge somehow gave him assurance. It was as if that cylinder of brass and lead could hold back death by the energy imprisoned within it. A fool hen or a porky might come along or—the thought came to him suddenly out of the past—with that cartridge he could maybe make a fire, the way Texas did in the Red Lake country!

You pried out the bullet and poured most of the powder from the case. Then you shredded a small piece of cloth—a piece of handkerchief or shirt—and rolled it in the loose powder. You wadded the cloth back into the case and from a three-foot range fired it into a hollow stump. Then you blew on the smoldering rags, adding twigs slowly until you had a blaze. He could get dry wood from the underside of leaning dead stuff.

Only—maybe it wouldn't work. It had taken Tex four tries to get a fire. His heavy jaw clamped shut. It had to work. Without a fire he was done. He rolled over painfully, gathering a little heap of moss and twigs which his body had kept dry.

He had just drawn his knife to cut a piece of shirt when far off in the silent forest he heard it—Chugach's shrill battle cry.

It rose in an excited crescendo, merged into savage snarls and suddenly broke in agonized screams that turned Jim's blood to ice.

He struggled to stand up and fell back with a groan.

"Chugach!" he shouted helplessly. "Chugach!"

The screams faded to a long-drawn whimper, thin and faint, and died away. He sat tensely, pulses hammering, staring toward the sound. He tried to whistle through dry lips.

"Chugach!" he called again. "Here, boy!"

And, after a long time, Chugach came, gasping, his chest and muzzle splashed with blood where the lynx had mauled him, dragging his paralyzed hindquarters along the forest floor. Fifty yards away he fell, unable to go any farther. His forefeet pawed the air as he writhed in torment, trying to bite the hurt that stabbed his back.

"Steady, boy."

Crawling, Jim tried to reach him, but his strength was gone and he lay staring hopelessly at the struggling dog. He was seeing the bundle of tawny fur and needle teeth that was Chugach eight years ago, growling defiance at the big dogs in the settlements. He was seeing the floppy-eared, long-tailed Chugach who couldn't pull a sled or do any tricks, but who stuck when the chips were down. . . .

Chugach who thought he could lick the world.

Slowly, Jim drew the .30-'06 toward him. Raising himself on his elbows he slipped off the safety catch and snugged the stock against his shoulder. The rear sight swam mistily before his eyes and the muzzle wobbled back and forth. His grip tightened and when the ivory bead of the front sight settled behind Chugach's ear—about where the gold collar would have gone—he squeezed the trigger. The roar of the big rifle was an explosion in his brain, causing everything to whirl before him. Chugach jerked, shuddered and lay still.

Jim swayed forward, letting the empty rifle fall. And that was the way Hank found him a half-hour later, his face buried in his hands beside the blackened campfire.

"I heard your shot," Hank said, "while I was hunting beyond the ridge. Lucky for you the weather kept me buttoned in at the lake or else. . . ."

Famous Military Corps

6. THE UNITED STATES LANCERS

WHEN our Civil War broke out in 1861, our country was not only a non-military but an un-military country.

The surrender of Fort Sumter created a tremendous wave of patriotism in the North and when Lincoln called for seventy-five thousand volunteers the recruiting stations were swamped, but very few of these patriots realized what war meant and looked on the whole affair as a military picnic which would end by the imminent fall of the Confederate capital.

As a consequence this nation never has seen before, or after this time, the fantastic uniforms and military bodies that sprang into being. The Napoleonic tradition was still strongly entrenched in military thought and therefore, Voltigeurs, Foot Chasseurs, Hussars, Lancers, Zouaves and other military absurdities poured southward.

Most of these corps were gradually absorbed into the regular state troops but the Zouaves and Lancers retained their individuality and saw plenty of fighting.

Of the seven regiments of Lancers that enlisted in the service of the United States, between 1861 and 1865, the one which probably saw most service, and that was the most efficient, was the regiment known as Rush's Lancers, carried on the rolls as the 6th Cavalry.

This corps was organized in Philadelphia in 1861. They carried a lance of the Austrian pattern, nine feet long with an eleven-inch three-edged blade. The staff was of fir, about an inch and a quarter through with a ferrule and a counterpoise at the heel. A swallow-tailed pennon flew at the end below the blade point and the entire weapon weighed about five pounds.

McClellan had a number of French officers on his staff, and it was they who had persuaded him to incorporate Lancers into the Northern cavalry; but the Lance, as a weapon, was unsuited to cavalry maneuvers in the rough terrain of the Eastern battlefields and in addition to their lances these troops carried sabre and pistol and early in the war carbineers were added to each troop.

The Union Cavalry in the first two years of the war was a mismanaged force. Seemingly no one in the Northern command understood how to effectively use this arm and in addition the average Northern recruit was not a horseman and it took time to train him.

It was not until Sheridan, Custer and other born cavalrymen came into prominence that the Union Cavalry began to reach the effectiveness of Stuart's and Forrest's riders.

Nevertheless the Lancers saw service in the Seven Days Battles, Antietam, Fredericksburg and scores of lesser fights.

However, at the end of the war, Lancers did not fit into the peculiar problems of our regular cavalry and this arm was discarded in the United States service.

—By Howard R. Voight

GIFT OF MOURNING

By GEORGE C. APPELL

It did not occur to him that white is also the color of mourning. . . .

A STORY OF CHINA TODAY

GENERAL of Division Dzao relaxed on the wicker settee in the resting room of his headquarters, a fat smile on his fat face. His plans were complete, everything was ready, and tomorrow morning at eleven o'clock he would go under a flag of truce to the Gate of Great Peace on the opposite side of the city and confer with the Red siege commander.

He had long since decided to surrender this great southeastern city entrusted to his care and declare it open. Only one thing had held him back—terms. Not terms for the protection of the inhabitants and the bolstering of their economic welfare, not terms for the well-

being of his troops or the prevention of their being held as hostages, but terms for himself. What would Dzao get out of it? And the Red siege commander, following a series of flag conferences, had agreed to some. Tomorrow, then, would be the last conference, and Dzao would ride right past the last road block, the Barricade of Permanent Security, and through the Gate of Great Peace and across the neutral ground and into the Red commander's headquarters.

He would not return, he was going over to stay—it was a matter of personal convenience. Already the Red snipers were wriggling into the city, making it thoroughly unsafe for anyone to be on the streets without obvious identification. The defenders were huddled under their scanty stacks of sandbags, furtively searching for targets.

There was only one other person among the defenders who could have the slightest suspicion of the general's intent, and she was so low in the local Nationalist heirarchy as to preclude any possibility of her interfering with Dzao's immediate future.

She came side-stepping through a bead curtain into the resting room, carrying a tray with tea makings. Ordinarily, this would be a task for a servant, but these were not ordinary times. It had become increasingly necessary, during the five weeks she had been attached to Dzao's headquarters as interpreter, to confer each evening with him on official matters. Official matters do not warrant the ear of a servant, so Mei-hwa herself had suggested fixing tea for the general. She was wearing red that day, the color of happiness, and Dzao, rising from the settee, asked her if she bore glad tidings. He asked it suspiciously.

"No, it is just that I wish to feel better inside. In other lands, when a woman is disturbed by things, she buys a new red hat. It makes her feel better. . . . More hot water?"

Dzao accepted his cup and peered at her over its raised rim. Her pale skin was softer than usual in the light of the evening lamp, her dark eyes were deeper and brighter. The tiny white flower near her left ear caught the light and held it a moment, like a five-petaled mirror.

Dzao lowered his cup and swashed tea back and forth through his teeth, then swallowed it. "What is this evening's business?" He tried not to sound listless. He tried to sound as if the business were dreadfully important to him, and would have a mighty bearing on the morrow's administrative measures. He suppressed a smile. "There are more foreigners to be evacuated?"

"A very few."

Foreigners, the general understood, were the principal reason for assignment to his headquarters of an interpreter. With government officials refugeeing their way south, it had become more and more necessary for the army to clear up loose ends, and the evacuation of foreigners, particularly westerners, was one of them. That a temporary shortage of educated males had necessitated sending a young woman to duty made it all the more pleasant. Young women, the general reasoned, were creatures of emotion and not logic; therefore this one would be less apt to guess the motives from which his immediate future had been projected.

"You can arrange for their dockside visas yourself," he told her. "At eleven in the morning, I go for the last time to confer with the enemy regarding the safety of my command." He drew a brown manila envelope toward him and untied the flap. He peered inside, nodded, and retied the strings. "One must take all precautions."

"What have you there, Division Commander?" She smiled eagerly. "Perhaps some requisitions for food? The people are hungry." It was an idle question, for she knew what lay inside the envelope, and had known for several days. It was her business to know.

"Plans of the city," the general answered abruptly. He had long suspected that she peeked at things here and there, and there would be no harm now in telling the truth. It didn't make any difference anyway—she was merely a lesser employee. "In case the Reds wish to know details beyond my powers of remembrance. I'm capitulating, you understand, and I wish to cooperate in every way I can. It might prevent—ah—measures of retaliation."

"You will go under a flag, of course. At times, Division Commander, I fear for your safety." Mei-hwa had had ample opportunity to study his mind and divine

his thought processes—even in the comparatively short space of five weeks she had learned exactly what to say, and when and how to say it. The natural leadership of Chinese women is no accident; it is the heritage of forty centuries.

"Never mind my safety." The general carefully lighted a Russian cigarette and blew smoke through the lamplight. He fixed lidless, lynx-like eyes on her. "It occurs to me that you have evinced much tenderness for my safety of late."

"You are the commander. You have responsibilities."

"I mean, about my trips to the neutral ground."

There was a short silence.

"Yes—there is a personal reason." She gazed at her daggered nails, and her smile sank to a frown.

"So?" He leaned forward. "And what is that?" He had been hoping, in the back-attics of his mind, that perhaps this girl would accompany him.

Unshod mule hoofs thudded to a stop beyond the cooking room. Wheels screaked on dry axles, and were silent.

SHE shrugged a small shoulder. "If tomorrow you go by way of the Gate of Permanent Security, perhaps you would deliver a present to a friend." She stiffened slightly as her words flew faster. "His name is Colonel Tsiang; he commands that road block and is an old friend of my family's. Or was—before the Reds bombed their village near Peiping and killed them. This Tsiang—he tried to help them. My family would like him, now, to have this thing I managed to rescue." She inhaled and exhaled several times before she added: "I would take it to him myself, or send it by messenger, but the snipers—" Again she shrugged. "You will be going under a flag."

"Yes, I will deliver it. . . . What's that noise? A cart arrives."

"Ah!" She rose and turned to the beaded curtain. "The disposer of food scraps comes. A moment, Division Commander."

On the step behind the cooking room she bent low in the darkness until her head was level with the driver's face. He

"It's no mystery to me!"

SAYS STAN WARREN, PRIVATE EYE

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wore a greasy smock and a wide-brimmed straw hat. He pulled back on the reins and greeted her in the nasal accents of the southern districts.

"You have garbage? I must eat."

Daily since the sniping had started, this man had come and greeted her so. It was not the duty of the cook to apportion the scraps to beggars, but the duty of the ranking lady of the house. Mei-hwa, in effect, was that. She shook her head quickly.

"That jade I gave you for safe-keeping. I wish it now."

"So?" The man fumbled inside his smock. "You wish it back?"

"Yes—it will be delivered to my friend at eleven o'clock in the morning." A conquered city becomes a looted city, but no one would think of searching a scavenger for valuables. Mei-hwa's jade piece had been more secure with this collector of scraps than in any headquarters safe.

The cart driver reset a panel of the frieze that had come loose, placed the frieze in a sandalwood box, and handed it over to her.

"My fee will be a full belly."

Mei-hwa popped fingers at the listening cook. "Throw him today's garbage!"

In the resting room, she placed the box on the table and slid back the lid.

"See, Division Commander? White jade. Perfect."

"White—" He leaped forward and seized it and lifted it from the box. He tongued his lips in admiration. "An exquisite frieze!" He hefted it once or twice. "And the weight to size is so precise—so delicate!" He turned the frieze this way and that in the light. "Observe, there—the tiny priests leading their little donkeys—you can see the lines around their eyes!" He rapped it with a knuckle, sharply; and nodded. "Pure jade. White, too. The finest jade is the color of white." It did not occur to him that white is also the color of mourning. "Where have you been keeping it? I have not seen it here before."

"China is big, Division Commander. It has many places for secrets, and it keeps them well." She was having difficulty with her breathing; those knuckle-raps could possibly have been destructive.

His glance up was sharp. "You are well? Your skin is flushed." He returned the jade to the box and slid shut the lid. "Or—" again suspicion flickered across his eyes—"is it that perhaps my little interpreter has a heartness for the collector of scraps?"

"General, I did not think you an emotional man." Her smile was arch.

"I have seen him occasionally, before sunset. He seems not the scavenger-type to me." The collector of scraps generally came at twilight, so as not to target himself.

"Then perhaps he was not always a scavenger. Many types of people have had to find work—any work—since the maelstrom came down from the north. Collecting food scraps has one advantage—one can eat."

The general looked shocked. "Maelstrom?" Then he closed his teeth and held in his thoughts, thoughts of the inevitability of the conquerors' coming, thoughts of their offers to him of payment in specie, of fine uniforms, of his own auto. All in exchange for a few old maps and diagrams, and his avowal of loyalty to the new cause. He was not alone—many were doing it, were going over to where the sun shone brighter. Emotion had nothing to do with it, it was based upon logic. The logic of events.

Disinterestedly, Mei-hwa murmured, "China has had many conquests, but never a conqueror."

"Why do you say that?" The general tilted his head suddenly as the distant snapping of musketry filtered through the subdued sounds of the city. He smiled. He picked up the sandalwood box and tucked it into his tunic. "I will deliver this to your friend, Colonel Tsiang, in the morning." He patted it tenderly. "It must be worth a fortune."

"My family owes it to him, from their graves. He tried to help them, when no one else did."

General Dzao beamed more broadly. "And now it is my privilege to convey it." He arose. "Shall we have supper?"

IT WAS 10:28 next morning before the general could get away. There had been many last-minute details to attend to—the stamping of his chop mark upon dockside visas, the checking of ammunition and strength returns, both now vitally im-

portant to him; and the packing of his most valuable effects into the smallest briefcase available. Everything else would have to be left.

"Take over liaison with the foreigners until I return," he told Mei-hwa. "I should be back for lunch." A brief thought of inviting her with him sparked across his mind, but he did not seek its return. It would be better without her; there would be other fine young ladies, and with an auto and fine uniforms and hard specie, it would not be difficult to have them. This one, this Mei-hwa, had been most recalcitrant these past five weeks. "Noodles, tea and cakes for lunch," he suggested, to make his return seem the more believable. "Take over."

He directed the driver of his battered jeep to proceed to the Gate of Great Peace by the shortest possible route, which happened to lie past the Barricade of Permanent Security. His jeep had been salvaged from a former American ordnance dump near Kunming, and it threatened his maintenance of face each time he appeared in it. Soon, however. . . . He sighed happily as he rode, oblivious of the strangely-silent city and the bare, empty streets. A small, dark figure appeared on the roof of the China Bank Building, noted the flag flapping from the windshield post, and withdrew. The sun glinted purple on the sniper's rifle barrel.

At the Barricade of Permanent Security —a deep field of barbed wire stretched between two sand-bagged emplacements—the driver halted the jeep.

He called, "Pull open the barrier!"

A voice blurted: "A moment!" A face appeared in an aperture. "General Dzao? I am Colonel Tsiang, commanding at this post. I believe you may have something for me. A scavenger informed me earlier that—"

"Sorry, Colonel. My business is most urgent." He pressed a forearm to the flat, hard bulge in his tunic. "I have nothing for you." The still-unsmashed clock on the China Bank Building read 10:58. It had been a slow trip across the city, slower than the general had anticipated. "Hurry! Across neutral ground to the enemy gates."

He smiled inwardly as the jeep snorted through the barrier and out under the Gate's gabled arches and onto the hard-packed dirt highway that led across to the Red outposts.

The jeep rocked around some potholes and snarled to a stop by the looped coils of the concertina wire that is so cherished by invaders as mobile road blocks. A command cracked out, a section of wire was hastily removed, and General Dzao's jeep rolled in. He saluted the Red commander, who saluted in return.

He saluted the others, flattered that there were so many of them, and of such high rank. He was still saluting when the explosion blew them all into a ragged circle of shattered bone and burning cloth and heat-twisted insigne. Blackened shreds of men and metal spun high on their arcs and floated lazily a moment before falling back into the road. The echo of the detonation fluttered south across the city and brought fear-packed faces to darkened windows. It fluttered all the way back to Dzao's headquarters on the opposite side, and it brought a smile to the face of the besmocked scavenger.

"Climb on, Mei-hwa. We meet Tsiang at the canal and flatboat to safety."

"Speak Mandarin," she pleaded. "These southern dialects are not musical to my ears."

The driver put the mule to a heavy trot, playing the whip back and forth lightly. "I saved a lot of that jade—all the inside, where I carved it out to build in the clock-mechanism for the bomb."

"Our family won't miss any of it. That was nice timing, brother. Even back at Yenching University, you liked to play with such devices."

He whipped the mule up a pace. "We must hurry. We have others to check on in nearby cities. . . . Yes, it was nice timing. Tsiang knew how to turn it off, had the general given it to him."

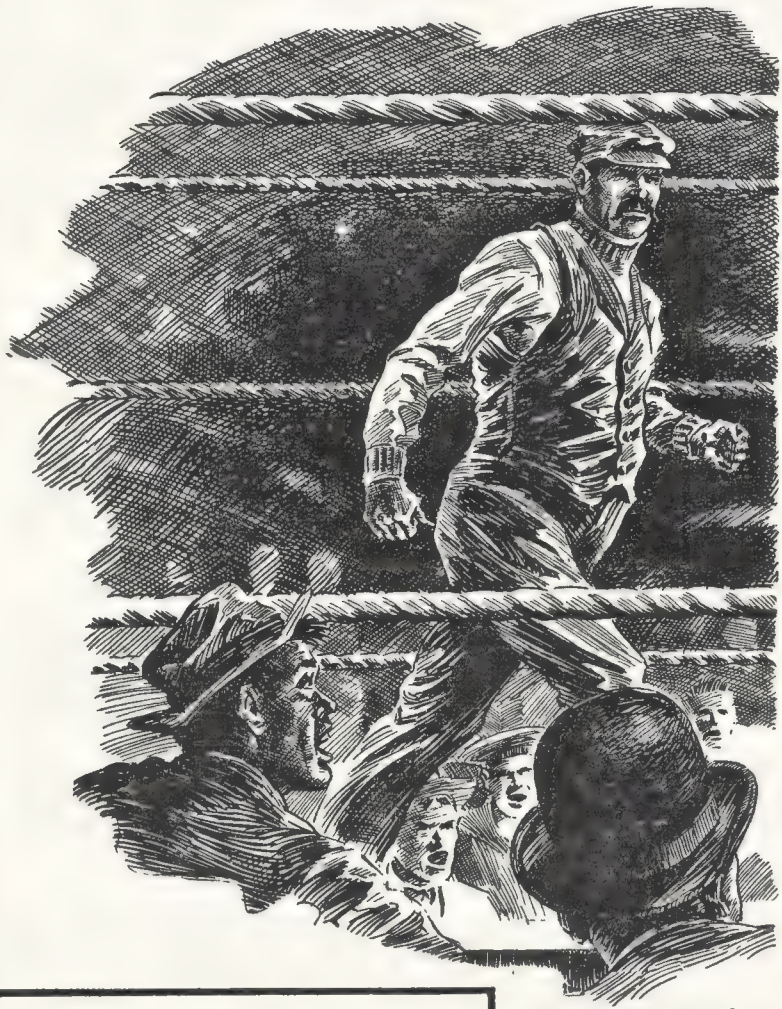
"Ha! Last night I thought he'd break it, he rapped it so hard."

"A queer one, sister, that Dzao. . . . Faster, mule, we must reach the canal before the snipers recover their wits. . . . You say he had no emotion, none at all?"

"Only one, brother. . . . Ah, there awaits Tsiang!" Her voice strengthened with pleasure. Tsiang was her fiance.

"What one was that?"

"Greed."



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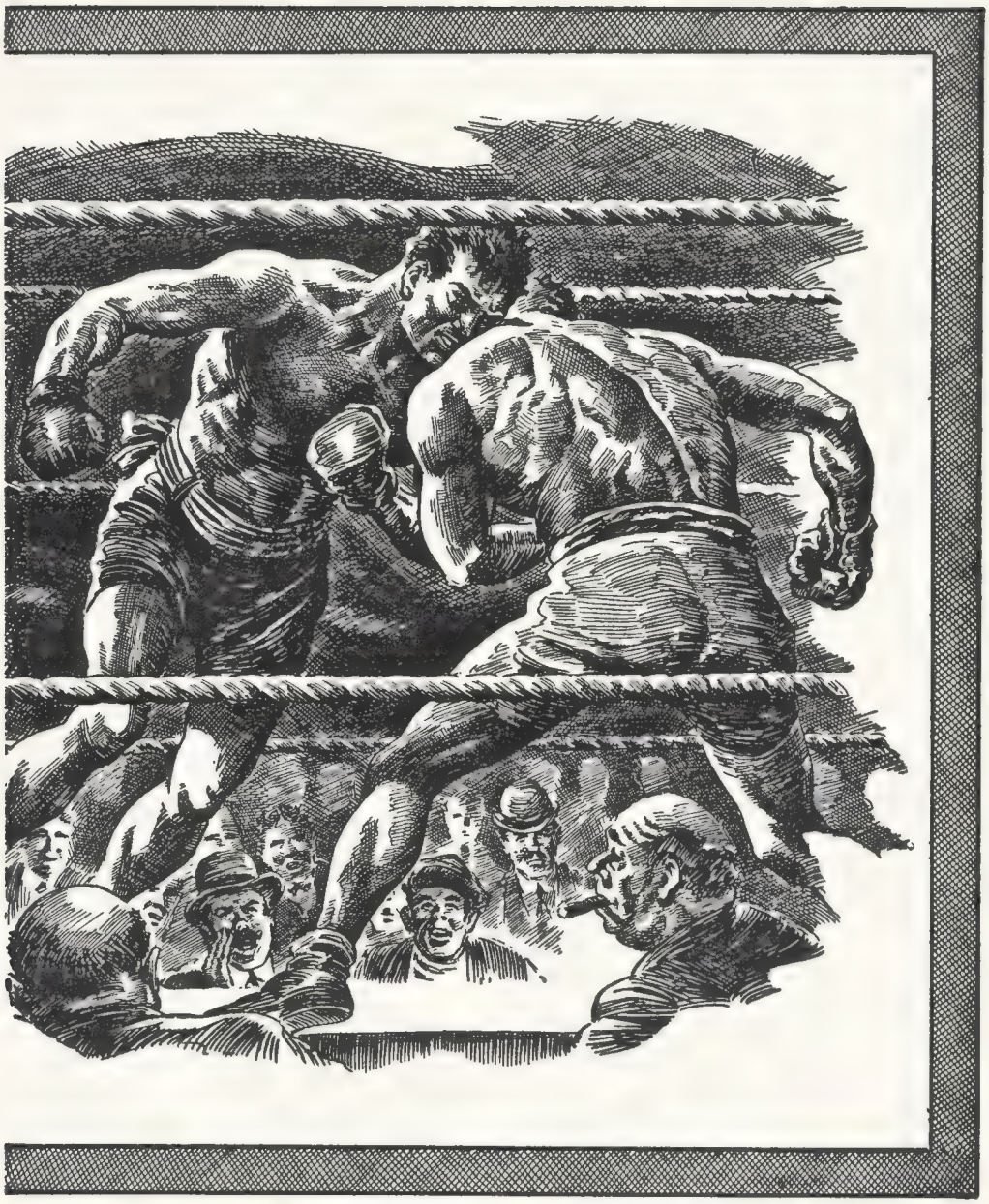
Jim Jeffries and Dumb Julius

By EDDY ORCUTT



Tom Sharkey blasted at the champion from every angle from the first gong. . . .

The Greatest Sports Story Ever Told

THERE was a moment when Dumb Julius could have touched the Big Fellow's hand, but he didn't do it. It wouldn't have been right.

"All right," the cop said, "get back!"

Dumb Julius got back.

The policeman's nightstick and arm formed a barrier, and Julius kept behind it,

staring over it. The cop stared, too, and the little crowd at the dressing room door shoved in and swayed back again, gabbling and laughing, waiting to cheer the new champion. Julius waited, too—but when the cheer came, he couldn't join it. He could only keep on staring.

Dumb Julius felt something in his thin chest that was neither chill nor hot, and a lump swelled up in his throat.

The dressing room door opened.

Above it a single incandescent bulb glowed yellow against a tin reflector, and Jim Jeffries came out slowly into the thin spotlight—James J. Jeffries, new heavyweight champion of the world.

The crowd cheered. The champion's friends jammed the doorway—Brady, Tommy Ryan, Billy Delaney, Jack Jeffries and the rest.

Dumb Julius stared with wide, starved gray eyes at a man whose bulk all but filled the doorway—at a man huge and heavy-limbed and saturnine, who tilted his derby to shadow the puffed eye and the bruised lips that crafty old Bob Fitzsimmons had battered in the ring that night. He stared at a powerful and unbeatable man, flushed with a hard victory and grinning a little bashfully when the crowd cheered him. And in the champion's grin, Dumb Julius found still an edge of the grim, ironic amusement the Big Fellow had shown in the ring. Jeff had laughed in the ring. He had laughed through a smear of his own blood while he crowded in steadily against the lashing of Old Fitz's deadly fists.

The champion's party pushed through and the crowd closed in, so that all Julius could see was the welter of heads and shoulders and the silhouette of the waiting carriage against the lights of Coney. Then the carriage moved, the crowd whooped, and Jim Jeffries was gone.

Dumb Julius was alone, pushed and elbowed as the crowd thinned out along Surf Avenue, but he was not lonely. He was full of the feel of what he had seen. He was warm, near tears, and his throat ached.

The crowd smothered him in the riotous jam on the trolley, but it did not matter. The long ride to South Brooklyn did not matter. The mob on the ferry, the sweltering walk up Whitehall Street—none of these mattered, and the utter weariness in his thin body did not matter. He had seen his glimpse of greatness, and he was filled with its glow.

In the ring that night he had seen something more than the spectacle of two prize-fighters battling over a roped square of white canvas. He had no knowledge of the ring. He had gone to Coney on a ticket won in a raffle at Stillwell's pool room, where he delivered clothes for a cheap cleaner. But Jim Jeffries, crouching and relentless and laughing grimly at his own hurts, had given him a direct and sudden sense of something unconquerable—a thing glamorous and magnificent. He had seen a fighter who could not be beaten—had watched him push doggedly into the cruel slashing of the ring's deadliest puncher. In the end, when Jim Jeffries' fated battering had run its course, Julius had seen the Big Fellow unleash his own sudden power. He had seen Bob Fitzsimmons stretched on the wet canvas, destroyed by a fury that neither wiles nor gallantry could conquer.

IT WAS past one o'clock when Dumb Julius threaded the east-of-Broadway backwash of the city, on the encroaching borders of Little Italy, and reached the drab shop on Bowen Street where he lived. The June night was stifling, and he still had work to do, but he walked rapidly. He crossed Bowen to the saloon called Herman's, entered, went to the far end of the bar and waited there for a time. Both barkeeps were busy.

Singer Burke lounged over finally, with a grin for the awkward, patient kid.

Singer Burke was captain of the Bowen Street gang of toughs, and his word was the district's law and order. In Herman's he was part bouncer and part boss.

"Hey, Fritz!" the Singer called out, "gimme the key!" The left side of his mouth was twisted, indented, battered in street fighting.

One of the bartenders took a key off the back-bar and slid it along the mahogany so that it stopped exactly in front of Singer Burke. Burke picked it up, and Julius followed him to back door into the adjoining barber shop. Burke watched idly while Julius gathered up the half dozen suits left there for cleaning or pressing.

"This is a hell of a time of night, kid," Singer said. "Out sporting, hey?"

Julius was impressed by the attention from Singer Burke, yet at the same time felt some right to it.

He said, "I went to the big fight."

"What did you think of it?" Burke locked the door and Julius halted at the question—stood clasping his bundle of clothes in front of him, looking intently at Singer. He wanted to say something, but his mind raced through the question and found an answer that he knew he could not put into words.

Burke laughed.

"All right, Dummy," he said.

Julius went away, still silent. That was why they called him Dumb Julius—his mind worked swiftly to a question's answer, but often it warned him, also, against trying to put the answer into words. Then he was dumb.

HE WENT out of the saloon silently, carried his dangling bundle over to the shop. A sign on the glass front said: WEITEKAMP TAILOR—CLEANING & DYEING, and the door to the shop was in an alcove beside the window. Julius let himself in, groped his way back and switched on a light bulb dangling from a cord.

The shop was airless, hot, heavy with the dry odor of cloth and the reek of cleaning fluid. Across the mezzanine a rack of clothes—suits newly pressed, uncalled-for coats and suits, or dye jobs hung up to air—made a screen for a space in the rear. While the irons were heating, Julius pushed through the rack of clothes and entered the space behind it. This was his home. He had a cot there with a tumble of blankets on it, a small packing case, and a big fragment of plate-glass mirror tilted on the ledge of the wainscoting. It was very private, stale-smelling and stifling hot.

Dumb Julius trembled suddenly, giving way to a strange eagerness. With swift, uncertain fingers, he stripped off coat and vest and shirt. He unbuttoned the upper half of his undersuit, bared himself to the waist and tied the sleeves together at the midriff, like a belt. He tilted the fragment of mirror so that he could see himself in it. He crouched a little, putting out his left fist. He could see his face, neck, part of the left arm and shoulder. He tucked his chin be-

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hind that shoulder, bent his right elbow across his belly. He crouched lower, tensing his own stringy muscles and trying to give them the shape of Jeff's. . . .

Julius Brown was twenty years old on the night when Jim Jeffries beat old Fitz. He stood five feet ten and weighed less than a hundred and twenty pounds. He had never known the feeling of being well fed, and had never given the matter any thought. He was four years out of the St. Vincent's Home in Brooklyn, did not know who his parents were, and earned six dollars a week. He returned two dollars a week to his boss—he was buying an interest in the business—and lived on four. He did not know that he was thin, that he was homely, that he was awkward, and he was completely accustomed to the hurt of being laughed at.

That night, though, he dared to pose in the Jeffries crouch and shuffle forward, watching himself in the mirror. He dared to feel sure of himself, like a man who could take great hurts, laugh at them, and go on to win. Tonight he took old Fitz's right-hand smash to the mouth, grinned, wiped the blood away and went in again. He shoved out a powerful left hand, throwing a six-inch jab that was like a battering ram. He cocked a right hand that could crush and stun. . . .

When he went to the bench, the irons were too hot. While they cooled, he sorted out the pressing jobs and gave them a light sponging. One of the suits was Singer Burke's, and although the tag did not say CL, Julius took it downstairs and spotted out the soiled places before he pressed it. He felt grateful to Singer. He had not been able to answer Burke's question about the fight, but he felt grateful to him for asking it.

He worked steadily for perhaps an hour. He lowered his head stubbornly, his arms whipcorded by the heavy iron, and pretended that the drench of sweat was the blood-salted sweat of a man fighting in the ring.

CHAPTER 2

ON THE afternoon of November 3, 1899, Dumb Julius paid five dollars for a ticket on Jeffries to beat Sailor Tom Sharkey at Coney Island that night. A man named Sully Reid made a book at Herman's, and Julius bought his ticket there—his first wager, and his first use of money for anything but the barest of necessities.

By that time—five months after he had first seen James J. Jeffries under the cruel glamor of the ring's floodlights—Julius had the money to spend. In a curious, indirect way, Jeff himself was the cause of it.

In July a gang war flared up, and a crowd of tough Italian boys offered Singer Burke a fight for control of the district. Weitekamp's was one of a hundred establishments that paid Singer's crowd two or three dollars a week as protection against "breakage," and to Julius this tribute seemed a normal thing. He resented the Italians' rumored threat to break in on it. More deeply, though, he resented any attack on the man who had been kind to him on that great night of his. He was all for Singer Burke.

Vicious midnight brawls broke out in the Bowen Street neighborhood, and Julius noted strangers among Burke's men at Herman's Bar—imported hoodlums, hired from other districts. Making his rounds for Weitekamp, Julius heard rumors, and by midnight, Bowen Street was deserted every night. Burke's men patrolled the area in small groups, lurking under cover and awaiting an attack.

Then, late in the month, the raid came and Singer Burke killed a man in it. Chance made Dumb Julius his ally.

He was aroused at around three o'clock of the morning—across the street at Herman's glass was crashing and there was an outburst of shrill yells. He piled out of his cot, hurried downstairs and stared through the front window. He saw part of the fight. He saw the invading hoodlums fire their last volley of rocks at the saloon, saw one brief mêlée, before the invaders turned and pelted across the street toward the alley by which they had entered Bowen Street—the alley on Weitekamp's side of the street.

Julius heard a shot. He did not know then what the sound was. Later he learned that Burke had stationed himself there at the first noise of the raid, drawing his pistol to cut off the Italians' retreat.

A man ran past Julius' window, suddenly, turned, flashed a knife—and then Singer Burke ran at him. The gun in Burke's hand blazed. The man staggered, swerved

into the alcove beside Weitekamp's door, and Burke shot again and again. And then, standing above his victim, Singer paused uncertainly.

Julius hammered on the door—opened it.

"Mr. Burke! Mr. Burke! In here!"

Singer acted. He bent and snatched up the dead man's knife.

He said, "Look, Dummy—he tried to break through the door and you opened it!"

Singer grabbed Julius' left arm, clenched it and jabbed the stiletto into it, well away from the wrist. He did it swiftly, ripping a little. It felt like a blunt blow until the pain came. Julius gasped.

"He stabbed you! You yelled!" Singer Burke dropped the knife. "Then I come running across from Herman's!"

Even in the shock of the sudden pain, Dumb Julius realized the role Burke had given him—knew that Burke depended on him. He leaned against the door jamb.

Burke said fiercely, "Talk, Dummy! Do you understand?"

"Yes," Julius told him.

Then the cops came.

The rest was very simple. A week later Burke was arraigned in magistrate's court, with Julius Brown and a sympathetic Irish policeman as the only witnesses. A shrewd, sleepy-looking lawyer named Breed presented Burke's case—in view of Julius Brown's evidence against the dead hoodlum, his killer was not bound over for trial. It was open and shut.

The moral aspects of the matter did not bother Julius, because he was quite unaware that there were any, but when Singer offered him ten dollars as a present, he thought ahead quickly and refused. Jeff and Tom Sharkey had been signed ten days after the Big Fellow won the title, and Julius knew that he would need money to see that fight. But he also knew definitely that he did not want to hire out in Singer Burke's line of business.

"Have it your own way," Burke said.

Julius, picking up clothes at Herman's, knew that Singer could be useful to him some time, but his "Thank you," was grave and non-committal.

There was beginning to be a kind of assurance behind the lad's dumb quiet, and it may be that Singer Burke sensed it. From that time, at any rate, Julius rated as Burke's friend. Burke entrusted him with small errands, and once or twice bought him a glass of beer at Herman's.

TOWARD the end of that hot summer, Julius went to Mr. Weitekamp for his Jeff-Sharkey fight money. The cheapest ticket to the Coney Island Sporting Club would be five dollars, and Julius had decided that he could not be sure of saving five dollars out of his earnings by the end of October. He asked Mr. Weitekamp, after work one night, for the refund of five dollars from his two-dollar-a-week investment in the business. Julius had kept the account on neatly-squared sheets of wrapping paper, and it figured to nearly four hundred dollars.

Mr. Weitekamp refused. Money was tight, and it was no time to spend five dollars on foolishness.

He said, "Look, an agreement is an agreement, Julius. I'd hate to see you break this agreement, because you got money in it—you might lose your money if the agreement got broken."

That night he told his story to Mr. Burke, and early the next afternoon Singer called on Mr. Weitekamp. Singer's technique was excellent.

Mr. Burke locked the door behind him as he came in. He called Julius down from his pressing bench on the balcony. When he sat himself down in front of Mr. Weitekamp at the cutting-table, the tailor broke into a visible sweat. Mr. Burke grinned with his twisted mouth, but his eyes were hard, bright, appraising, like a snake's. He "softened" Mr. Weitekamp by describing in detail some of the accidents that had happened to people who injured friends of Singer Burke's.

"I don't know how they happen," Singer said, "but they do happen. Maybe you didn't know," he added, "that Julius here, was a good friend of mine?"

Mr. Weitekamp shook and stammered, but Burke seemed hardly to notice it. He looked at a slip of paper in his hand, and said, "Now it seems Julius, here, has been robbed of three hundred and eighty-six dollars, Mr. Weitekamp. He knows who has it, and he wants it back, and I want him to get it back. If—"

"He ain't robbed," the tailor said,

frightened into talking. The size of the amount scared him. "I'm letting him buy into the business. I'm—"

Burke laughed. "You're funning, Mr. Weitekamp. Now by seven o'clock tonight—"

Julius felt sorry for Mr. Weitekamp at last, but he did not interrupt. He let Mr. Burke handle the matter in his own way. Weitekamp broke down and bawled, before Singer was through with him—and Singer Burke deliberately, methodically, listed Mr. Weitekamp's promises on his slip of paper and made the tailor agree to each. Julius was to have a refund of thirty-six dollars and half interest in the shop. He was to have a wage of ten dollars a week. He was to have access to the shop's books, and a weekly share of one half the shop's profits above wages and expenses.

"And now, Dummy," Burke said to Julius, "the next thing is to go to the lawyer and have him give you some papers on this."

And in Herman's, while Burke scribbled the lawyer's office number, Julius began to know dimly that a change had come into his way of living—and that he owed Singer Burke something more impressive than a thank-you. He knew what to do. The idea of doing it excited him suddenly.

"Here you are," Burke said.

Julius Brown asked, "Will you let me buy you a drink?"

Burke laughed outright, and Julius felt a hot flush along his cheekbones. But Burke dug a big hand into his shoulder and shook him jovially.

"Why the hell wouldn't I?" he said. "Hey, Fritz! Money on the bar! The boy's buying!"

CHAPTER 3

A GALE swept Coney on the night of the Sharkey fight.

Dumb Julius climbed to his perch in the gallery with the first rush of bedraggled, wind-whipped spectators, splashed from the lanes of mud at the narrow entrances. The crowd pounded in and the arena rocked with the sound. But in between, Julius could hear the drumming of rain gusts on the raftered roof.

Julius was cold—he was thoroughly wet, and his shoes were mud-soaked—but it was not the cold that made him shiver. He was afraid.

He had spent his own money to see this fight, and he had wagered his own money to back the champion. About those things, he had the same feel of complete rightness that he had known when he saw Jim Jeffries beat Fitzsimmons. His fear went deeper. For Dumb Julius, all the security and glamor that his new god had given him were at stake that night in the ring. These possessions of his were tender and secret and a little absurd, like a raw kid's first love for a girl. Jim Jeffries had them in his keeping. He was to take them into the ring that night, while Julius watched, and hazard them against the rocky fists of Sailor Tom Sharkey.

At eight o'clock the battery of electric lights above the ring was switched on, and the crowd greeted the sight with yells and cheers. There were hundreds of lights, and the reflectors were better arranged than they had been for the Fitzsimmons fight. The ring was blinding white.

The preliminary boys came on—and fought. One of them looked like a small edition of Jim Jeffries—and their battle gave Julius a little rest from the dread of waiting.

Then a delay came. The crowd, already yelling for Jeff to come out and get his, began to grow ill-tempered, restless. There were outbursts of hooting, cat-calls, hammering on the bleacher planks. Time dragged. Officials clustered around the timekeeper at the ringside, and the crowd grew angrier.

Julius, tense again, clenched his hands suddenly into the sweat of his palms. There was a new outburst of yells, a swift rising of the crowd around the dressing-room tunnel. A knot of men pushed out into the aisle, and the crowd cheered. A stocky fighting man, stripped down to his green trunks and wearing a towel over his shoulders, broke out of the knot of handlers and went jog-trotting down the aisle, mitting his bandaged hands above his head.

"Hey, Sharkey! Sharkey! Kill the big loafer, Tom!"

The crowd roared to him, and the stocky man grinned, liking it. His handlers hurried after him, swarming toward the ring. The mob's laughter roared out, cheering the tough sailor's hurry to get in and fight.

"Hey, Sharkey!"

Julius waited.

Then the clamor of the crowd heightened suddenly again—and there were jeers in the uproar, this time, because the crowd blamed the champion for the delay. Jim Jeffries came down the aisle slowly, looking at the floor. His handlers yelled back at the crowd, but Jeff made no motion. He walked steadily down to the ring, climbed in and mitted his hands briefly at the mob's yell. He was wearing his red sweater and chewed gum. He walked around his corner, tested the ropes and sat down on his stool.

Julius watched. Sharkey went over to Jeff's corner, touched his hands and swung away. Jeff smiled shortly when Sharkey turned his back. Sharkey strutted, still grinning a little at the crowd, but his grin was hard, serious, intent. He was a barrel-chested man, abnormally broad and close-coupled. Jeff topped him by inches, outweighed him thirty pounds, but Sailor Tom had the look of compact fighting power about him. The crowd's noise filled the arena. Another wait, then Referee Siler called the men out.

Julius heard the clang of the bell, at long last, from a great distance. . . .

Tom Sharkey came out of his corner cat-footed and almost running, and the champion stopped, crouched and jabbed his long left as the tough sailor began to swing.

Dumb Julius forgot the cold.

Julius forgot the cold, forgot the dread of waiting — stared down at the blazing ring, not hearing the wind's fury outside any more, nor the driving of the rain on the arena's gaunt roof.

He saw a battle of great fighting men.

Tom Sharkey, lion-hearted and bitter, blasted at the champion from every angle, from the first gong. Jim Jeffries looked sallow and staring under the scorching lights, but he settled grimly into his crouch and fought his own fight. The fury behind the Big Fellow's hammering left hand or the drive of his crouching right was no less bitter than the sailor's.

Jeff's right swept the sailor to the floor, tumbled him to the ropes, early in the second—and Julius Brown almost yelled. Sharkey leaped to his feet, stood scowling for a second with his hands down. When Jeffries charged in with the roar of the mob at his back, Sharkey swung savagely with both hands, rocked the Big Fellow back and finished the round in a fury of punching. The tide of battle whipsawed back and forth. The men slugged in

sharp rallies, circled each other warily when the going slowed, and every lull was breathless with a threat of the next attack.

Sharkey's hammering fists drove Jeff across the ring in the seventh, and the champion was unsteady when he went to his corner at the bell. But in the next it was Jeff who all but crashed the other man to the canvas—his right hand split the sailor's ear, smeared the side of his head with blood. The sailor wrestled sturdily against the Big Fellow's weight in the clinches, and there were jeers for the champ.

The fight went on. Jeff cut the smaller man's eye — and the sailor laughed and stuck out his tongue. Once for a whole round the sailor outslugged the champion at every turn, but in the clinches the champ winked and passed remarks to Tom O'Rourke, yelling crazily in Sharkey's corner. Jeff and the sailor grinned at each other when the bell came.

Sharkey took his cut eye, the split ear, the champion's terrific right-hand uppercuts that rocked his head back and drew blood from his mouth. He waded in. In the fifteenth round, he smashed Jeff squarely in the face, so that blood spurted from his nose—and then, as if maddened at the sight of it, clubbed the Big Fellow to the ropes in a savage fury that brought the crowd to its feet.

The men were tired, smeared, sweating desperately under the blinding heat of the arcs. They fought on. And up in the bleachers, Dumb Julius finally knew that his champion was beating his way to the fore.

Before the twentieth round began, Sharkey was weakening—doing his fighting desperately, in exhausted spurts. Big Jeff was coming in pitilessly, bearing down in the clinches, roughing the stocky sailor and nailing him with racking uppercuts when he got in close. In the twenty-second, the bell saved Sharkey—he laughed, going to his corner, but the bell had saved him. Jeff hammered him savagely in the next round, and in the twenty-fourth Tom staggered again and again, only his raw courage keeping him off the canvas.

The storm of the last round swept even Dumb Julius to his feet, rocking in the mob on the bleacher planks; and when the bloodied sailor cried in his last fighting despair, Julius knew that there were strange tears on his own cheeks, too.

In the bedlam at the end, Sharkey stumbled, clawing at Jeff's arm and wrenching off the champion's glove. George Siler stepped in, trying to push them apart, and motioned that the fight was over. He pointed at Jeff's corner, and one of the handlers leaped up to the ring and threw an American flag over the champion's shoulders. But Sharkey still struck out, trying to get around the referee and go on with the fight. He had two ribs and his left hand broken, he was bleeding from ear and mouth and the cut over his eye—but the stubborn man in the green Irish tights wanted to go on with the fight. O'Rourke had to pull him away, at last—and Tom O'Rourke was crying, too.

Julius Brown strained at the ring, staring desperately across the arena's madhouse, watching Jim Jeffries' every move. Jeff took the flag off, giving it to Brady. He tilted his head back, smiling and squinting his eyes while they sponged the blood off his face. People were crowding around him, and the mob packed the aisles below his corner. Jeff stood unshaken, victor again, and the hot ring lights gleamed on his wet shoulders.

Julius looked, knowing that his own private rightness was unshaken still, and secure. His eyes were misted and his throat ached. He wanted to cheer—but he had never done it, did not know how, and did not dare to try.

CHAPTER 4

MR. WEITEKAMP pointed to a couple of suits that he had mended and pressed. "These two go up to Mr. Corliss, at the Yale House, right away."

Julius had come in from his first deliveries, the morning after the Sharkey fight. He was gaunt with cold and bedraggled from the chill drizzle of November rain in the streets, but he spoke up to the tailor directly, as man to man.

"Mr. Weitekamp," he said, "I want to talk to you." Weitekamp looked at him in surprise.

"I think we better hire another man," Julius told him. "He could take care of

nearly all the cleaning and pressing, and I could put in all my time outside—delivering and collecting and working up business. We could make a good deal more money."

Mr. Weitekamp was dumfounded. "Hire another man!"

Lying awake the night before, completely sure of his own rightness, and thinking out the details for a new way of living, Julius had gone over his plan thoroughly, carefully, building no air castles. He did not want to talk about it now—much less argue it. He wanted to go out and go to work at it.

"Look," he said quietly. "I can go back to six dollars a week—that'll save four to pay the new man. We've had pretty near ten a week profit ever since we've been partners — if we put that back, there's fourteen, right there. I can get a good man from Lubic's that'll work for fifteen. And if I spend all my time outside, I know I can get twice the business I get now."

But the tailor was completely disorganized.

"Why, you—you—"

He was astonished and shocked at the flow of talk from Dumb Julius, and he was really frightened at the notion of spending money to take money. He blew up in a tirade. Julius waited, frowning a little.

When Mr. Weitekamp halted, floundering for new words, Julius looked at him directly, not smiling. He said: "Last night after the fight, I was talking it over with Mr. Burke—"

Weitekamp quit cold.

From that moment, Julius was boss at Weitekamp's—and from that moment he began to work out for himself his new way of living. He nursed his own private sense of Jim Jeffries' strength and sureness, unconquerable in the ring. In his own single-minded and wordless way, he set out to build for himself a strength and sureness to match that private legend. He wanted to be a man who might meet Jim Jeffries, take his hand, and know that it was right to do so. From that moment, he worked at it.

"You can 'it 'im, but y' cawn't 'urt 'im!"

Old Bob Fitzsimmons had said that about the Big Fellow, on the night Jeff had stripped him of the title. The same thing was true, curiously, of Julius Brown.

Cold and hunger and shabbiness could not stop Dumb Julius, because he accepted them as normal. Ridicule could not hurt him in the "swell" establishments where he called, because he was used to ridicule. He could not be frightened out of the rough places—he had grown up among toughs and hoodlums, and he feared them only in the sense that a skilled woodsman fears a puma or a rattlesnake. And he could not be stopped by sheer fatigue, because he had experienced it for years.

Julius worked early and late, through that cold winter of the century's turn—and he got results.

No job was too small for him. No customer was too exacting. And, when it came to negotiating for regular business with hotel managers, boss barbers, proprietors of saloons or sporting places, Julius was not abashed by any amount of "front." His persistent, dumb sureness was often more effective than any amount of glib salesmanship, and it was always more amusing.

"All right, Mister Brown, you win!" If the customer enjoyed laughing at him, calling him "Mister," Julius did not mind. He got the business.

Julius put the new man, Rudolph, to work, and kept him busy. Rudolph was a thin, sharp-nosed fellow, a hard worker, and he paid dividends from the start. Weitekamp dropped into the rôle of tailor and shop foreman. Julius handled the books, figured costs and profits, managed the wage and material accounts, and settled the shop's three-man payroll every Saturday night. The shop was a paying proposition, and Julius began to make money for himself. By the spring of 1900, he had a personal bank account of nearly three hundred dollars.

He took, also, to trailing the fringes of the sporting crowd, followers of the ring—there was money to be made from snappy dressers and free spenders; and there, too, he heard talk from men who knew things about Jim Jeffries, or about Joe Choynski, Kid McCoy, Joe Walcott and the Giant Killer, Fitzsimmons, and the lesser giants of the time. While he made money, he also learned the rôle he wanted to play in the spending of money.

He put some of this learning to use on the night Jim Jeffries fought big John

Finnegan of Pittsburgh at the Cadillac Club in Detroit. Jeff was going to fight Jim Corbett at Coney Island in May—Julius was going to have a twenty-five-dollar ringside seat for that fight—and the Detroit show, early in April, was a warm-up. Sam Brady had agreed to pay Finnegan a hundred dollars if Jeff did not knock him out inside four rounds.

JULIUS went over to Herman's early that evening, with some fifteen dollars in cash to deposit in the safe. He cached his money there every week, taking a memo from Fritz as a receipt. When he had a sum of fifty dollars or more, he would take the money over to the Broadway Exchange to deposit in his account—and since it took him several weeks to build up fifty dollars in savings, he generally had a credit in the safe at Herman's.

Fritz took his money that night, scribbled a receipt and handed it across the bar. Four or five men were standing nearby, talking about Jeff.

One of them said, "But he's young, Nate. Sure, he's putting on weight—but I bet it's good, solid muscle."

"Jeff's hog-fat and out of condition." Nate was well-dressed, middle-aged, the type that Julius recognized as a sportsman, not a hanger-on. "Finnegan's big, strong as an ox," Nate insisted. "He'll stay four rounds without any trouble."

Julius said, "I'm betting Jeff knocks him out!"

The men turned. Nate's glance was insolent only in an impersonal, inquiring way. He intended no affront to the thin youngster in the neatly shabby clothes. He merely looked him over. And Julius, used to that scrutiny, met the glance without embarrassment.

"How much?"

Nate asked it jovially, winking at his friends. They joined in the chuckle. Making a wager with the hobbledehoy at the bar was a good joke—still a better joke because the hobbledehoy took it seriously.

Julius remembered the sum Jeff's manager was offering Finnegan in Detroit that night. He turned to Fritz Mayer, the barkeep.

"With what I've got in the safe now," he asked, "would I be good for a hundred dollars?"

Fritz erased his grin. "Don't be foolish with your money, Julius."

Nate reddened with a tinge of anger—he suspected the kid of trying to turn the joke against him. Because he could neither bluff nor call against a mere lad, he felt that the lad was being fresh.

But Fritz nodded at the men.

"It's his money," he said. "He's good for a hundred."

Julius handed Nate one of Weitekamp's cards. He said, "I'm in this business—I'm good for the money. I'd like to bet a knockout, if you want to bet." He said it directly, respectfully.

Nate narrowed his eyes thoughtfully. He did not want to rob a boy, but he did not want to let a boy bluff him. Something in the way Dumb Julius looked at him convinced him that he could bet. He took out his wallet.

"My name is Gardner," he said. "Nate Gardner of Philadelphia." He shook hands with Julius. "Even money John Finnegan lasts four rounds." Fritz picked up the money and gave Julius and Mr. Gardner penciled receipts.

Julius played out his part—he knew that it would not do for him to linger in Herman's, waiting for a news bulletin.

He said, "If you'll excuse me, Mr. Gardner, I have to make a call. I'll be back about ten."

The hundred-dollar bet had attracted a little crowd to the bar, and Julius sensed the feel of the crowd as he shouldered his way out. There was amusement among those older men, but a kind of respect, too. They saw that Dumb Julius was willing to "lay it on the line." Julius felt the glow of that new experience while he walked the streets, waiting for ten o'clock.

He reentered Herman's at a little after ten—there was more of a crowd there, and the place was growing noisy. He looked up without any uncertainty at the black-board where Herman's chalked up race results and ball game scores.

"Hi, Dummy!" Fritz greeted him with a broad grin. Men at the bar turned to look at Julius, making way for him.

The blackboard said: JEFF BY A KAYO—*55* SECONDS OF ROUND ONE.

Nate Gardner and the Philadelphia

crowd gathered around, and Mr. Gardner put out his hand.

"Shake, son," he said. "No hard feelings!" He was liquored, but the drinks had only made him expansive. His hot handclasp gave Julius Brown a sense of something more than equality—the sense of his own rightness, of being a man among other men, and a better, surer man than most.

He handed his receipt back to Fritz.

"You can put it on my book," he said. "I'll be in Monday. But right now," he added, "I'll buy drinks for the house!"

He took his own drink gravely, unsmiling. Afterward, on his tumbled cot behind the rack of clothes at Weitekamp's, he could not tell whether the glow in him was due to his first taste of whiskey or to his first experience of a crowd's applause.

CHAPTER 5

JIM CORBETT slipped the champion's plunging left. Jeff's right hand caught him high on the left shoulder, swiftly hunched. He rode the terrific punch back to the ropes, ducked and laughed. He ducked under the Big Fellow's left hand again—and this time he hooked his own left. He flashed three punches, lightning fast, like the flicker of a snake's tongue. Twice he hooked to the body, bringing down the champion's right hand. The third punch cracked on Jeff's jaw, jerking the champ's head back.

Julius looked up into the blinding heat of the ring lamps. He sat straight, arms folded. Perspiration drenched him—the May night was warm, and the arcs over the ring glowed white-hot like a steel-furnace. The heat at the ringside was agonizing.

Not afraid, but tight with pain, Julius looked up into the glaring lamps, watching Jim Jeffries go steadily into the twenty-third round of a battle that was like a nightmare.

He saw the Big Fellow give way slowly, bringing Corbett back away from the ropes toward the center of the ring. The champion's right eye was almost shut and red stained his chest—but he grinned a little, briefly, and spat a fleck of blood from his lips. He pushed Corbett away, plunged after him again. Gentleman Jim broke swiftly out of range, tantalizing the Big Fellow with speed and laughing at him.

Jim Jeffries charged, Corbett danced back, and the crowd's roar had a jeer in it. Dumb Julius tightened at the crowd's jeering, but his pain had anger in it rather than fear. He hated the crowd for laughing, not seeing what he himself could see.

Jim Corbett was lithe, black-haired, white-skinned and smiling. For twenty-two rounds he had raked the brown grizzly from California with every punch in the book. He had stabbed his left at will into the Big Fellow's bleeding mouth. He had hooked it short, vicious, to body and face. The champion's tremendous left hand never quite reached him, and Corbett had laughed again and again at the huge sweep of Jim Jeffries' right. He had slipped, blocked, sidestepped—moving around the Big Fellow, stepping in and stepping out—until at times Jeff stood still in the center of the ring, hands down, looking with a sardonic grin at the smaller man, while the crowd rocked with laughter and jeered him.

Now, going into the twenty-third, Corbett was still unmarked, still fast and confident. Stepping back out of the clinch, he said, "Try it again, Jeff!" He looked over his shoulder at the ringside, laughed and said something that Julius did not hear. The Big Fellow rushed again—and Corbett, standing straight up, blocked and broke ground swiftly. He peppered his left into the champion's face, rode the rush back to the ropes again and clinched.

Once more, wearily, with a tired glint of amusement at the crowd's uproar, the champion moved back toward the ring center, bringing Corbett away from the ropes. He wrestled, laying his weight grimly on Corbett's shoulder. The referee stepped in.

Two and a half rounds more, and Corbett would win a hands-down decision—the world's title with it.

Julius knew that. Up in the ring, Jim Jeffries knew it, too. But Big Jeff still stubbornly fought his own fight, plunging with all his power at every tantalizing chance. And Julius Brown, staring through salt sweat up into the ring lamps' glare, still felt secure about Jim Jeffries' own kind of greatness. He felt no fear. He was

not sure of the fight's outcome. He was sure, in his own speechless way, of James J. Jeffries.

Jeff tried again, savagely intent as he drove in. And this time, by the space of time's least measure, James J. Corbett was not quick enough. The Big Fellow's left hand jolted at Jim Corbett, snapping two hundred and ten pounds of weight into the six-inch blast of the big fist. The jolt cracked on Corbett's jaw while the smile still curled his lips.

Corbett's arm jerked, suddenly limp. Then he bowed, sagged and fell forward in a crazy sprawl. His head banged the ring floor.

The crowd leaped up—Dumb Julius held himself quite still, not breathing. The crowd's yell had a screaming edge, then died suddenly. Julius watched while Jim Corbett fumbled with numb arms for some purchase on the canvas. Charley White bent over him, counting. In the queer silence, Dumb Julius stared up into the blinding lights, watched Corbett get to his hands and knees, watched him shake his head in a dead daze.

Julius Brown saw the champion stand up out of his crouch, hands down, looking at the man on the floor. He saw Jeff's eyes narrow, his battered lips working slowly, methodically, chewing his gum.

Corbett faltered, straining at the canvas. He smiled into the ring lamps—a vacant, silly smile, the ghost of his taunting laugh. He shivered, collapsed and sprawled forward again. He was out.

The mob's outcry was brief, sullen, scattering into a clamor that had no cheers in it for the champion. The crowd milled around the ring, and Jim Jeffries bent to pick up the beaten man, straining huge muscles at the dead weight while seconds and handlers crowded in. Then Brady was pounding the Big Fellow on the back, Jack Jeffries was trying to bundle him into the red sweater, and the Big Fellow was laughing, shaking his head at the long struggle Corbett had given him.

Corbett got up out of his corner, finally, and the crowd's cheer was a sudden outburst—sharp, clamorous and warm. Corbett was unsteady still, and chalk-white, but he managed to smile. He went over to shake the champion's hand.

Julius went away, then.

He got his look at Jeff—Jeff was laughing, patting Corbett on the back. Jeff had the gloves off. His hands were still bandaged, and he was wearing the red sweater. Jeff was laughing, but the crowd was clapping for the man he had beaten.

After the long ride home and the walk down Broadway to Bowen Street, Julius was very tired, but he kept his spark of anger against the crowd's jeers. Several men spoke to him when he entered Herman's, and a couple of the neighborhood soaks followed him to the end of the bar, where Sully Reid was paying off. Julius gave them no attention.

"Well," Sully said, "it's a tough night for the short-enders."

He took the ticket from Julius, filed it on the spindle, and counted out a little sheaf of currency—two hundred and sixty-five dollars. Julius had covered an even hundred of Corbett money at ten to six, and Sully held out five as commission. Julius banked his winnings with Fritz in the big safe.

Singer Burke was there with one of his men, guarding the bookmaker's bankroll. He grinned at Julius.

"Riding with the champ is all right while it lasts," he said, "but they'll get you in the end, Dummy. A champeen always goes in once too often."

"Jeff's different!" Julius Brown said it fiercely—so fiercely and suddenly that Burke threw back his head and guffawed.

Bystanders joined in the laugh. Julius felt the blood drain from his face, leaving it cold with sweat. But even then, swiftly, he knew that his pride and his anger were beyond the reach of wordy argument in a barroom. He made no answer, then—he saved it, knowing that he must have time to give it the rightness he craved.

A man at the bar jerked his thumb toward the door as Julius went out—he was explaining matters to a stranger.

"They call him Dumb Julius," the man said.

CHAPTER 6

IT WAS more than a year later that Julius saw the Big Fellow fight again—and this time, instead of taking the tedious ride to Coney, Julius crossed the con-

tinent. He went out to San Francisco to see James J. Jeffries defend his title against Gus Ruhlin, the Akron Giant.

The Julius Brown who signaled his cab to stop in front of the Court Hotel on Geary Street, on the drizzling afternoon of November 15, 1901, was a far cry from the lad in thin shoes who had watched Big Jim Jeffries fight Old Fitz a little more than two years before.

Julius waited in the cab while the driver set his brake, climbed off the seat and carried the hitching-strap and its iron weight forward to the horse's head. He heard the iron clang on the pavement. The cabbie came to the door, and Julius got out, hurried into the lobby and waited. The cabbie was in yellow oilskins, and took his time with Julius's bag—the sifting cold rain meant nothing to him.

Julius gave the man a dollar bill carelessly, and the hotel porter came forward to take the suitcase. Then, through a crowded lobby smelling of wet clothes and warm, alcoholic odors from the bar, Julius walked slowly to the desk.

The excitement in him was deep and completely satisfying.

At the desk he ordered a good room, with bath, signed the register and said to the clerk, "I ordered a fight ticket held here. The name is Brown. Shall I pick it up now?"

The clerk was a thin man, flustered by the rush of business and the clamor in the lobby. A stout man in a frock coat stood near by, chatting with a couple of guests, and as Julius glanced at him the stout man glanced at Julius. Julius tagged him as manager of the hotel.

The stout man came forward, extending his hand.

"My name is Grayson," he said. "I'm manager here. What can I do for you?" He glanced over at the clerk. "Look, Willis," he said, "Mr. Brown's fight ticket will be in the safe. Possibly," he said to Julius, "you'd prefer us to hold it here until after dinner."

The clerk was reaching into the safe.

"I'll take a look, if you please. I ordered a good seat, and I'd like to check."

"Exactly," Grayson said. "Exactly." The clerk held out the ticket.

Julius examined it—ringside, row A.

Grayson said, "It's on an aisle. I think I know the numbering." Julius nodded, tossed the ticket back and took out his wallet.

"I'll pay for it now," he said, "but I'll call for it after dinner."

Mr. Grayson smiled broadly. "No hurry," he said, but he picked up Julius's twenty and handed it to the clerk. He looked at the entry in the register. "This is the best you can do for Mr. Brown, Willis?" To Julius he explained: "We're crowded tonight—I expect we'll be filled before dark."

"Is there any Ruhlin money around?" Julius asked.

Grayson's frown was doubtful. "Mr. Staley—Denver Jim Staley—is offering some Ruhlin money, I understand. But he wants three to one for it. Mr. Shea, in the buffet here, could direct you, but—"

"I'll be down later," Julius said. He shook hands pleasantly with Mrs. Grayson. "I'm obliged to you, sir."

Julius Brown sat contentedly on the edge of his bed, gazing out at the gray weather—he had already heard it called "unusual." He smiled a little. He relaxed. Without any phrasing of words and thoughts, he enjoyed the feel of rightness in the place where he was and the thing he was doing.

Back in New York, he had a half interest in two more shops, farther uptown. Durban Breed, the lawyer, had put him in the way of them and advanced part of the money he needed to buy in. He had put Rudolph, the sharp-nosed cleaner, to working outside, with the lads calling and delivering. In many of a score of bars and hotels back there, men would mention Julius as a first-rate hustler. He had built a business—even while he sat on his bed, smiling contentedly at the gray drizzle that hid the San Francisco skyline, those shops in New York were earning money for him.

He drowsed a little, resting after the long trip.

It came to him at length that the Big Fellow was resting, too, that afternoon, across the bay in Oakland—training finished, ready for the gong against Gus Ruhlin. He stood up, thinking of that. He felt the deep, satisfying thrill of it.

He left the room, locked it and went downstairs. The crowd in the bar was loud, jovial, yet excited—and it was a new

crowd to Julius. There were dandies there in cutaways and top hats, there were cattlemen, there were miners in from the hills or down from the Klondike—mingled with them were the city men, out early from their offices, milling into the fight night throng. Shouldering his way toward the bar, Julius got the feel of the crowd more mixed, more mingled, warmer, than any he had encountered in New York.

"—preachers can't stop it. It'll go on."

"There was a line-up on Larkin Street, waiting for 'em to open up the Pavilion, at three o'clock. In the rain, too."

"Well, they say Gus is a tough customer—"

Julius got scraps from the buzz of talk.

Shea, the head bartender, directed him across the crowd again to a man sitting at one of the tables against the wall.

"That's Mr. Staley," he said. "I think he'll accommodate you." Julius made his way to Staley's table.

"I want three to one," Denver Jim Staley said shortly, when Julius had introduced himself. He was a heavy, slow-spoken man with hostile eyes, and Julius tagged him at once as a meat-hunter rather than a sportsman. A couple of other men sat at the table with him, and there were three or four others standing, evidently in the same party. Staley did not rise. The men looked silently at Julius.

"I can't cover much at that price," Julius explained. "I'm from out of town, and I have only a little cash with me. But I'd like some of it."

"A hundred?" Staley gave him a slow, insolent smile.

Julius answered the smile and bluffed a little, feeling sure of his man. He said quietly, "I'd rather see a little more than that, Mr. Staley—will you make it five?"

Staley's eyes were quick and hard.

"Ruhlin has only an outside chance," he said. "I'll lay a hundred against your three, but that's all." The insolence had left his face and he was angry.

But Julius was carefully polite, smiling a little.

"I'm sorry to have troubled you," he said. He made his way back to the bar.

He caught Shea's eye, and Shea grinned at him. "Any good?"

Julius shook his head.

"Mr. Staley could spare only a hundred," he said, "and I didn't want to fool with it. Will you fix me up a whisky sour?"

Shea waited on him.

Julius wanted to have money down on Jeff, and the odds did not bother him—his comfort came from the size of his own risk, rather than from what he stood to win. But it pleased him to have set Denver Jim Staley back on his heels, and it pleased him to have turned the story over, casually, to the head bartender. It would get around.

The fight-night crowd clamored at the long bar, and Julius felt a glow at the crowd's excitement—yet also he found it puzzling. He could see no reason for a lineup outside the arena in the rain, no reason for a special train up from Los Angeles, no reason for the crowd's temperature of suspense. True, the Big Fellow had not had a real fight in eighteen months—but Julius could not believe that Ruhlin figured to give him one that night. Gus had fought Jefferies a twenty-round draw in San Francisco four years before, but Fitzsimmons had knocked Ruhlin out, later, and so had Tom Sharkey. Julius could not see that Gus was even a good 3-to-1 chance.

Then, warmed by his drink and the crowd's clamor, Julius found his answer—it went to his head a little, like liquor.

The town's excitement might have, he saw, the same reason as his own. He had not crossed the continent because he thought the Ruhlin fight would be close, and San Francisco did not expect the fight to be close—the odds proved that. The town was excited, as he was, by something legendary and brutal and glamorous—something that had nothing to do with the outcome of a fight. The town was a fight town. Dumb Julius felt warm and secure and at home.

CHAPTER 7

THE Big Fellow was there, waiting. Julius looked up from the ringside into Jim Jeffries's corner, not ten feet distant. Overhead, floodlights sputtered in a canopy that a crew of workmen had just hoisted above the ring, and a kinetoscope operator trained his camera from beside a ringpost twenty-four feet away. Julius looked up

into the sputtering glare, already beginning to grow hot, and saw Jim Jeffries crouching on his stool, ready to go.

And Julius knew that he was nearer than he had ever been before to the thing that he wanted.

"—on behalf of Sailor Tom Sharkey!"

Julius saw the champion grin, while Billy Jordan bawled out the tough sailor's challenge to the winner—the crowd whooped and yelled at Sharkey's name. Then Jordan was leading the referee to the center of the ring.

"—Mr. Harry Corbett, the referee!"

Again the crowd's roar. Corbett beckoned to the fighters' corners. Jim Jeffries topped his handlers by a head, even to Julius, looking up from below. He walked out—Billy Delaney, Brother Jack, big Bob Armstrong and Kid Eagan crowding around him. Jeff had the red sweater over his shoulders. He was chewing gum.

Gus Ruhlin came out.

The Akron Giant was a smaller man than Jeff—he looked pallid under the lamps, and he had his mouth open stupidly. Madden, Denver Ed Martin and his other seconds shoved close to him in the huddle. Denver Ed said something to Jeff, trying to sneer at Jeff's grin. The referee took Ruhlin's arm and Big Jeff's, and began to talk.

The crowd kept up a rapid fire of shouting at the ring, and the Pavilion echoed with noise—noise heightening and growing expectantly shrill.

The fighters turned back. The clang of the gong was fierce, abrupt.

Jeff walked out deliberately, touched hands with Ruhlin, and the Akron man circled cautiously away. The champion settled into his crouch and followed. Even in the high uproar of the crowd, Julius could hear distinctly the sharp creak and scuffle of the Big Fellow's shoes on the canvas—a sound both slithering and staccato that gave rhythm to his rush. Ruhlin swung out wildly with both hands. Jeff grinned, rushed him, pumping the left, and Ruhlin grabbed. Jeff roughed him in the clinch, talking and grinning and cuffing at him, and the crowd yelled when Ruhlin complained to the referee. Corbett shoved the men apart.

Julius knew the end—and the crowd, by the angry derision in its yell, did, too. Dumb Julius watched Jeffries himself. He swayed a little, unconsciously, to the swing of Jeff's big shoulder. The intent, inquiring look of Jeff's face fascinated him. He liked the limber flex of his legs. Corbett had made the champion look blundering and slow, but he was not and never had been. He was huge, powerful, heavy—but he moved like a cat. He was fast.

Ruhlin squawked to his referee at the end of the round—and in the next, lashing out at Jeff more viciously, he kept up his

DUMB JULIUS

complaints. Jeff was hitting him low, he yelled, pointing. Jeff was roughing him, using a shoulder in the clinches. Ruhlin jabbered away, giving an edge of farce to the battle. Jeff grinned once or twice, making some remark to Harry Corbett. They went into the third.

The crowd roared at Jeff to knock him over and shut him up. It hooted Ruhlin, stirred to anger by the man's protests. And Jefferies went in to end it.

Through the third and fourth, Dumb Julius watched the champion go in grimly, methodically, to cut the other man down. He saw Jeff as a fighting machine, impersonal and smoothly geared. Ruhlin fought fiercely in flurries—once his right hand smashed the Big Fellow squarely in the mouth, with all Ruhlin's weight behind it. Jeff stepped back, shook his head and

smiled. Then he went in again. Ruhlin yelled to the referee. He yelled to the ringsiders. In one frantic flurry of punching, he drifted his punching low.

"That's what he wants!" he yelled. Jeff shoved him savagely away.

Twice in the fourth round Jeff drove in suddenly, trying for a knockout, twice Ruhlin got away, jabbering. Jeff stepped suddenly out of his crouch, swung twice—left and right—and the Akron giant wobbled and fell. He was up at nine, stumbling. The bell rang. Jeff stopped short. The crowd's clamor did not let up during the intermission. Jeff slid out fast for the fifth, caught Ruhlin, knocked him over. Ruhlin got up, swung wildly, and stumbled into the ropes and went down when Jeff rushed. Jeff eased off when Ruhlin got up. He toyed with him, touching him up, watching for a spot to finish it. He shifted suddenly, drove his right to the midriff, swung around with the punch and walked away. Jeff nodded to the ringside. He had finished his man. But the bell rang—and Jeff turned, astonished, then grinned at the crowd. The gong had fooled him.

The crowd had been fooled in the same way, and Julius felt it—felt the fever of the kill sweep the mob, shrilling its uproar, and felt the crowd stop short at the sudden ending. Then, though, bedlam rocked the Pavilion, and Julius stood up when the mob did. He did not yell. The yelling around him was enough. The uproar stormed at the ring, but Julius watched the Big Fellow. Jeff looked across at Ruhlin's handlers crowding around their man. He turned and said something to Bob Armstrong, the big Negro, then glanced down at the ringside, grinning at the noise.

Julius almost caught the champion's glance—the brief thrill went deep. Jeff looked across at Ruhlin's corner again.

Denver Ed Martin, leaving Ruhlin, was talking to Corbett. Julius saw the referee shrug, follow Martin back to the corner across the ring to Jeff, stop and speak to him, reach for his right glove. Jeff stood up. The mob's uproar increased.

Jim Jeffries went over to Ruhlin's corner, then—tumult seething around the ring—leaned over and asked a question. Julius could see Ruhlin yelling at him, jabbering—and then the Big Fellow turned away with an expression of disgust on his face. The fight was over. Gus Ruhlin claimed he had been hurt and could not continue.

The riot began—but Dumb Julius, hustled and shoved in the crowd, looked up intently for a moment at the huge bulk of Jim Jeffries leaning on the ropes, his figure limned by the lights. That was what he had come to see. He was seeing it. He wanted to remember it.

All the way back to the hotel, Julius carried that vivid picture in his mind's eye—and, as curious background to it, the confused and clamorous memory of the rioting mob. That mob was angry, excited, desperately intent on the brief surge of battle under the ring lamps. Julius liked that mob—it was a fight-town mob. Jolting back to the hotel, Julius Brown made up his mind to another plunge.

At the Court bar he ordered a toddy. Another bartender served him, but Shea came over and called him by name.

"You won your money tonight, Mr. Brown," he remarked.

Julius said, "I'm moving out to San Francisco, Mr. Shea—I'm going to sell out my business in New York, and I'll need a lawyer to draw up the papers. Who's the best lawyer in town?"

Shea's Irish mug wrinkled suddenly with a gold-toothed grin. He made a little pointing gesture. "The best lawyer in San Francisco is standing right beside you!"

Julius laughed. The omen flooded him with a warmth that was like intoxication. He turned, met the broad smile of the pudgy man beside him.

"Well," the pudgy man said, "at any rate, I'm a lawyer!"

Julius reached for his wallet.

CHAPTER 8

"NOT later than July 5, 1910, before the club offering the best financial inducement, for a side bet of $10,000 and 75 per cent of the purse—"

Julius Brown, reading the newspaper story with his morning coffee, smiled a little, but his eyes were thoughtful. The story described the signing of articles for the Jeffries-Johnson fight.

That scene in the New York hotel room, the day before, was completely vivid to him. He could see Jim Jeffries—black-

browed and huge, a serious phlegmatic man, heavy in the waist, now, with hair thinning back from the temples. James J. Jeffries, retired and undefeated heavyweight champion of the world—a Jeffries thirty-four years old, growing bald, and five years out of the ring.

He could picture the big black champion from Galveston—he could picture Jack Johnson flashing the golden smile and cracking jokes while Big Jeff sat in angry silence.

Those two men were now signed to enter a twenty-four-foot ring, lace five-ounce gloves on their fists, and fight each other forty-five rounds or more to a finish.

"Not later than July 5, 1910—" .

Julius got up abruptly, picked his hat off the tree and started out of the hotel dining room.

"You're in a hurry this morning, Mr. Brown," the waiter said, coming up with an urn of fresh coffee.

"Yes, I'm in a hurry, Max."

Julius left the hotel, cut over to Market Street, and walked briskly but quite aimlessly through the hurry of early morning traffic.

Eight years before, playing his hunch about the town just as completely as he had always played his hero-worshiping certainty of Big Jim Jeffries, Julius had adopted San Francisco as his home. It had worked out well—both hunches had worked out magnificently well. But now, pacing through the thronging city workers on Market Street, he was conscious of trouble.

He had wanted Jeffries, unbeaten and unbeatable, to come back and fight Jack Johnson. He had had no notions about white supremacy—the matter did not interest him—but he had wanted to see the Big Fellow in the ring again, crouching and grim and intent, moving like a cat and boring in against a man who could make him fight.

He had wanted Jeffries to fight Johnson. Johnson could make him fight—two weeks before, down at Colma, Julius had seen the black giant come off the floor to flatten Stanley Ketchel with a blasting savagery that was already a classic of the ring. Johnson had toyed with Tommy Burns. He had played with big Al Kaufman. He had stopped old Bob Fitzsimmons in two rounds.

He could give any man a fight.

Now Jeffries was signed, at last—and Jack Johnson had joked about it. Julius had seen the big black man joke and pour leather. Julius knew the famous golden smile.

He walked hard, trying to walk his trouble off.

His ordinary working day was a hurried, steady routine—he had five establishments in San Francisco, and was opening another in Oakland. With Nick Schraft, he was half owner of a tailoring shop that catered to the sporting and political crowd. Nick had tailored Abe Ruef and Francis J. Heney, Lew Powell and Jimmy Britt. He had once made a suit for John L. Sullivan—the characteristic gray costume, with long coat and black-braided outseams to the trousers. Neither Nick nor Julius was ever off the job—the two made a first-rate team. Nick was the showy partner, though. Julius was the driving, tireless, quiet one.

But this morning Julius walked the pavement because his mind would not think for him while he worked. His mind busied itself strangely with pictures out of the past, and those pictures had some vague connection with his trouble.

He could see Jeff in every picture—big Jim Jeffries, undefeated champion of the world—grim and bloodied as he took his beating, but unshaken, waiting for his moment.

Corbett had tried him again, too, and Julius Brown had seen that.

He had seen the Big Fellow outspeed and outpunch the gallant dancing master—this time easily, with Corbett on the floor twice before six rounds were gone. He had seen the smother of Corbett's blows bounce off, drawing only a little blood, while Jim Jeffries followed, measuring, punching and hurting. He remembered Corbett's smile, Corbett's talk—and he remembered the white pain on Corbett's face after that knockout in the tenth. They stood Corbett up on the ropes and the crowd cheered him, not Jeff, but Corbett's body was blotched at the midriff and his white muscles were cramped and knotted from the hurt of Jeff's finishing punch.

Julius remembered it all—saw it all—

He remembered so much more.

He got for the first time some clear no-

tion of what he himself had done, during all those years of his dumb hero worship. His pictures of Big Jeff's fights went all the way back to that first night at the Coney Island Sporting Club, when the Big Fellow won his belt—and along with his picture of the ringside, Dumb Julius looked at a few unaccustomed pictures of himself.

There was no great pride in him—only a recurrent warmth and certainty. He had been right, all along. He saw the thin, sallow lad that he had been—a shabby lad in paper-thin shoes—hustled by the Surf Avenue cops when the champion left his dressing room at Coney. He saw himself, still thin and shabby, perched in the gallery when tough Tom Sharkey fought himself out against the Big Fellow. He saw himself as a kid, then grown quietly to his strange early manhood—half man and still half overgrown boy—and he saw successive pictures of the changes that had come upon him.

He knew suddenly what his trouble was.

He did not try to put it into words, but he knew.

James J. Jeffries had no championship, now, to carry into the ring against Jack Johnson's black, lazy cunning and his cruel fists—to Dumb Julius, the Big Fellow would never be the champion of one race against another. What Jim Jeffries would risk in the ring, as far as Julius was concerned, was all the faith, all the certainty, all the glamor and all the security that Julius had ever known.

That moment of insight came to Dumb Julius, walking briskly down Market Street —an unobtrusive small man, comfortably off, silent and intent.

The moment of insight was like a physical blow. Julius took it, faced it, went on walking. He knew what his trouble was. He knew what great risk of his own had been pledged the day before, in that New York hotel room, under the flashlight smoke.

He took it, and walked on.

He entered Schraft's, nodded to a fitter in the showroom, and walked back to Nick's office. Nick greeted him with a quick grin on his hard, sharp-humored face.

"I saw Eddie Graney this morning," Nick said. "He says they're going to get the big fight out here—says Coffroth is willing to lay considerable money on it."

Julius had switched his thinking intently to other matters. Nick's fight talk disconcerted him.

Nick said, "What's the matter, Dummy?"

By habit, Julius would have had either to answer the question honestly or keep silent. He said nothing. Nick Schraft was used to that, though. He laughed.

"Who'll win, Dummy?" he asked, joking.

Julius answered that question.

He said gravely, "I don't know, Nick." And his answer astonished him almost as much as it did his partner.

CHAPTER 9

JUNE 18, 1910—

Dumb Julius took another thousand from Denver Jim Staley that night, and the feud between them took fresh fire from a minor extravaganza in the Jeffries-Johnson build-up.

The sports world had gone crazy. The dizzy prelude to the big fight gathered speed and madness as it approached the climax. In its last two weeks it fevered the sports, the gamblers, the moralists, the politicians, and the preachers of five countries into a turmoil unique in the ring's history. Louis Blot's "rebellion," which simmered out in hot air on the afternoon of June 18, was only one more symptom of the big fight fever of 1910.

Governor Gillette of California, breathing fire and righteousness, had ruled that no big fight—no prizefight of any kind—would be held in the Golden State.

Louis Blot, promoting a Langford-Kaufman contest, had announced to all and sundry that his fight would be pulled off on schedule, regardless; and his defiance, bruited in pool rooms and bars and sports pages, was tagged Blot's Rebellion. Denver Jim Staley, knowing that Mayor McCarthy, the supervisors, and influential San Francisco sportsmen were backing Blot, had offered a barroom bet of one thousand dollars on Blot to win.

Julius Brown had smiled and countered with two thousand on the governor of the state—before nightfall on the 18th, Governor Gillette had moved five companies of

national guard troops into the Presidio.

A third man sat at dinner with Julius and Nick Schraft at the Plaza Exchange that night, when Denver Jim showed up. The third man only glanced at Denver Jim, but his twisted mouth took the edge of a grin when he sighted Kid Murray, Denver's bodyguard, standing close. Singer Burke was gray about the temples, now, heavier than he had been.

Denver said abruptly, "Congratulations, Mr. Brown." Julius thanked him quietly, not rising, and Staley opened his wallet, took out the bills and laid them on the table. "One thousand," he said. Then he asked, "Ready to lay it out on Jeffries yet?"

The stir of an old anger made Julius careful.

"I'm still waiting," he answered. Denver Jim laughed shortly, contemptuously.

Nick Schraft's grin was malicious. He said, "That's an even-money laugh, Denver—would you make an even-money bet?"

Denver flushed at the taunt, and Kid Murray scowled. The same bitter fever infected men everywhere as the day of the big fight drew nearer—Nick tantalized the bigger man, taunted him lazily; yet the absurd anger between them was deadly serious.

Denver said: "I'm not a fool. I'll bet at today's odds—any amount you want! But I'll bet money, not talk!"

Nick winked at Julius when Denver Jim turned away.

Julius looked thoughtfully at his partner. His anger was deep, yet along with it he felt the old sureness and security again—had felt it ever since the day of his troubled walk on Market Street. He knew the right thing to do, just as ten years before he had known that it was right and secure to lay that first wager of his, five dollars, on Jeff to beat Sailor Sharkey at Coney Island. He knew what to do about Denver Jim Staley and every other casual gambler who figured Jim Jeffries like a number on the roulette wheel or a horse at Emeryville.

Passersby circled the table. The bar was crowded, and the dining tables were between the bar and the row of glass doors opening on the sidewalk. The night was warm, and there were a dozen tables under the awning outside, so that there was a constant movement of guests and waiters back and forth. It was customary, informal, and not unpleasant. Some of the Exchange habitués, knowing of the gamblers' feud between Julius and Denver Jim Staley, had made it a point to hang around.

One of them, Lew Kastner, the lawyer, said to Julius, "Well, Dummy, some more Jeffries money, eh?"

Julius answered him seriously. "I'll bet Jeffries," he said, "but not yet."

Nick asked Lew to sit with them and have a drink.

"Think the odds will shorten?" Lew asked. A couple of other acquaintances moved up; Nick invited them to have chairs. Nick said: "There's no man in the world that's two to one to beat Johnson. The odds are foolish."

Julius did not join in the argument. The odds did not interest him—he knew he would bet Jeffries if he had to give ten to one. He waited about laying his money only because it was the thing to do. He did not want to be played for a fool, any more than he wanted Jeff to go into the ring unprepared against Jack Johnson. If Jeff was to go in there as the undefeated fighting man, calm, confident and ready, he—Dumb Julius Brown—wanted to place his money calmly, according to his habit.

He got up from the table, excused himself, and went over to the bar. Harry Ransome, the head bartender, bustled up at his nod.

"Is Mr. Staley still in?" Julius asked.

"Yes, sir, he is. George, will you show Mr. Brown to Mr. Staley's table? It's over by the stair," he said to Julius.

Denver Jim's face was a heavy, hostile mask.

Julius thanked the boy. To Denver he said: "I'd like to place my money the night before the fight, Mr. Staley—suppose we agree to meet at the Hotel Corbin, in Reno, the night of July third."

Denver nodded, keeping his cold eyes on Julius' face.

"I expect to lay out all the cash I can raise," Julius added, "but I'll name the amount in plenty of time for you to cover it."

"All right," Staley said. His lips lifted a little in a smile that was not pleasant. "It'll be Reno!"

Julius turned away, stopped and turned back.

Kid Murray had risen from Denver's table.

Julius said quietly, "Tell your hooligan to sit down, Mr. Staley!"

On his way out, Julius bade Nick and the others good night, but he nodded once at Singer Burke. The Singer got up, followed him to the door, and the two walked over toward Geary Street and the hotel.

THE rest of that sultry June passed quickly for Dumb Julius.

Business occupied him—to raise cash for his wager on Jim Jeffries, he sold Nick half interest in the cleaning shops, and he drove himself early and late to reorganize his affairs on that basis. Nick wanted to share the Jeffries bet, but Julius would not let him.

"This has to be all mine, Nick. You see," Julius explained, smiling a little, "this is the last chance I'll ever have to bet the Big Fellow." He touched his partner's arm awkwardly. Nick sobered.

"Sure," he said. "Sure."

While Julius worked through those hectic days, making ready for his last wager, the fantastic finale of the big fight's build-up reached its dizzy heights—and though he saw through the madness, his own steady intent gave Julius a deep share in the excitement, the growing suspense.

He had seen Jim Jeffries box Choynski in the Dreamland exhibition, a month before. He had visited the camp at Ben Lomond three times, and had seen the Big Fellow work once. On two successive Sundays, Jeff had stolen away from the training camp before dawn, fishing the San Lorenzo all day while the sightseers fretted. But once Julius had seen him go through his routine—three rounds with Choynski, three with black Bob Armstrong, and two mild rounds with Jim Corbett. He had seen the hour's grind at wrestling, rope-skipping, mat exercises. He had seen Jeff stripped at perhaps two hundred and twenty pounds, browned and reddened by the broiling sun, bald, taciturn yet good-humored in his own grim fashion.

Julius knew Jim Jeffries with a kind of silent sureness, and knew what he would take into the Reno ring against the black champion.

He had seen Jack Johnson, too—had watched him training at Muirhead's, on the ocean front, and had seen him in the ring before the big fight was ever set. He had seen the tame ten rounds of Johnson's fight with Al Kaufman—the crowd hooted and walked out on that fight, but Dumb Julius had watched it to the last round. He had won money from Denver Jim Staley on the Negro's murderous knockout of Stanley Ketchel.

Julius knew what the black man would take into the ring at Reno. He knew these things, working, settling his affairs, feeling the strange thrill of the big fight's nearness.

In New York, they were betting ten to seven on Jeffries, but San Francisco's money went down at ten to six.

The turmoil mounted. San Francisco baked under a spell of summer heat; the papers reported that Reno was broiling.

At 9:30 on the morning of June 30, Dumb Julius crossed the bay with a yelling crowd of San Francisco fight fans, loaded with luggage chalked: "Reno or Bust!" Singer Burke was with him. They boarded the first section of the special that left Oakland, far behind schedule, an hour later.

The papers quoted James J. Jeffries that morning in a long statement about his year and half of hard, honest effort. The statement wound up impressively with three words, quoted.

Jim Jeffries said: "I am ready."

Jack Johnson hired a big red Rambler that day, piled his camp followers into it, and toured the town of Reno, waving his cap above his new-shaven head and smiling the golden smile.

Joe Gans, dying in Arizona, sent a telegram to Tex Rickard, asking the favor of a complimentary ringside seat.

Riding the first fight special to Reno, Dumb Julius carried a wallet containing his every dime of ready cash. The total was a little more than twenty-five thousand dollars.

CHAPTER 10

THREE days to go!

And the Reno bedlam gave no speed to the passing of those days—it only punctuated, for each hour, a kind of frantic fear that time would not pass, that the moment would not

come, that the big fight would not go on.

"Ten-six on Jeffries—who wants Johnson? Even money Jack don't stay ten! Even money! Ten-ten!" All day and most of the night.

Souvenir-hawkers harried the crowd. Staring signs placarded every gambling hall on Center Street, and spielers patrolled them, yelling the odds. Mobs milled from the hotels, up from the railway sidings, out of tents clustered on vacant lots. Mobs raided the restaurants, feeding in relays. Mobs jammed the lobbies and pool rooms and thronged the sidewalks in the desert heat of the mornings. By noon the customers were packed four deep around the roulette tables and massed along the bar in every saloon. Center Street was a tangle of assorted vehicles—buckboards off the desert roads, buggies, carriages, automobiles powdered white with dust.

There was no let-up in the bedlam—only a loud monotony that slowly dulled it with weariness. Each train brought its contribution to the growing mob, and the yard engines chuffed and panted, parking special cars on all available sidings. The mob did not wait for daylight. The noon heat did not stifle its noise. All night the lights of Reno blazed and the crowd's clamor continued.

Julius Brown experienced all the excitement and the dread of those feverish days, lived and breathed the suspense of waiting.

On the first day he took his cash to the bank, saving out only a few hundreds for expenses, and bought a certified check. While he waited in the clamor and the heat, then, going with Burke to see the sights of the mad mecca, the check in his wallet fortified him a little. He knew its use.

He saw Johnson clowning for the crowd at Rick's.

He saw Jeffries loafing at the Springs. A barrier of rope held the crowd back while Jeff played cards in the shade of a willow beside his white cottage. The crowd sweated and stared in the full sun, and Julius left quickly, hating the crowd.

He saw Tex Rickard's arena, a crude octagon of raw lumber, three hundred feet across, towering up in the vacant flats east of the town—sun scorched it, workmen sweated and hammered in it, getting it ready for the gladiators and the mob. It had the air of waiting.

There was noise everywhere—noise and heat and that air of expectancy.

On the night of July 3, Julius met Denver Jim Staley in the bar of the Hotel Corbin, while a little crowd of sporting men, hangers-on, gamblers, and the Big Fight's war correspondents from half a dozen cities, gathered around to see the checks posted. The big bet had been rumored, and the ceremony drew a good crowd.

Dumb Julius laid twenty-five thousand dollars on the line, that night—placing the biggest personal wager of the Jeffries-Johnson fight, and betting Jim Jeffries to win.

The crowd circled around Julius as he came in, Burke at his elbow, and closed in around him. A newspaperman shoved through. The crowd buzzed and laughed, craning at the slip of paper Julius laid on the bar. Denver Jim, hard-faced, sneering at the onlookers' liking for Jeffries money, confronted Julius in the center of the crowd. Julius took no notice of Denver's cold hostility. He took his check quietly out of his wallet and laid it on the bar.

Louis McCool, owner of the hotel, stood behind the mahogany—a smiling, dark-faced little man with fat hands. He was to hold the stakes.

McCool accepted Julius Brown's check with a quick, formal glance. "Yours, Mr. Staley?" he said politely. Denver shoved his check across—a check for sixteen thousand, two hundred and fifty dollars, covering twenty-five thousand at the odds of ten-to-six-and-a-half.

"Pick it up," Denver said.

"The winner can collect at any time within twenty-four hours after the fight ends," McCool announced. "I hand you gentlemen memorandum receipts, signed by me, and each of you had two witnesses to the transaction. In the event of a draw tomorrow, this bet will be called off. Each of you—"

Julius interrupted, smiling briefly.

"No," he said. "I'm betting Jeffries to win. If it's a draw, Mr. Staley collects."

Denver stared suddenly, but the crowd broke into a scatter of applause, pushing in, looking at Julius.

"That's the talk!" somebody cried. Ju-

lius, feeling the warmth and sureness of what he did, smiled again.

"Good!" McCool said. "Good! And now if principals and witnesses care to adjourn to my quarters, the house would be glad to wet the transaction—"

Denver Jim wanted to make a play of some kind—he offered his hand, tried a smile.

Julius felt no anger any more—he had just finished answering the only affront that had angered him in the past. He had answered it completely, accepting no out, laying everything he had on Jim Jeffries to win.

He shook Denver's hand.

The crowd's applause was for Julius, but Julius was glad to shake hands. He was glad and showed it—and the crowd began hand-clapping, boisterous shouting, so that others in the room pushed up to join the excitement. A man in a wide hat slapped a double handful of silver dollars down on the bar.

"Drinks!" he shouted.

Louis McCool held up his hands, chuckling.

"The drinks are on the house!" he insisted. It was perfectly safe for McCool—the role of stake-holder insured him five hundred or so from the winner.

Bartenders hurried up at McCool's word, and the crowd shoved past Denver Jim Staley, jamming noisily against the mahogany.

That night Julius Brown lay awake for a time, with Singer Burke breathing heavily on the cot beside his. The wager he had made, staking everything he had on the Big Fellow's last fight was the thing he had always wanted to do—the thing that he had known that he must do, some time. He was quiet and very content, and some of his pictures came back to him again. Pictures that had Fitzsimmons and Sharkey and Gentleman Jim Corbett in them. Pictures of Jim Jeffries, victorious, resting at the ropes under the blaze of the ring lamps.

Pictures, very dim now, of a funny, skinny kid practicing the Jeffries crouch in front of a fragment of mirror.

They fired volleys of revolver shots in Center Street that night, saluting the Fourth, clamoring for the big fight. The Reno bedlam went on. But Dumb Julius, even while he lay quietly awake, heard none of it.

CHAPTER 11

THE desert sky was white with heat, and the heat waves in the big wooden bowl shimmered with a thin odor of new pine planks.

Twenty thousand people watched the white ring, the taut white ropes, the waiting, hemmed-in square of canvas where the last big fight was to be fought.

That was what some called it—the last big fight.

Here in this colosseum of pine planks reared in the desert and ringed by bare, desolate hills, the cruel tradition of ancient Rome was to defy civilization with its final challenge. Here ghosts of all the forgotten gladiators were to strut for an ultimate hour, saluting the mob, hearing the mob's roar, then pass forever into oblivion. Here, in all the modern world, the crowd's blood-yell was to shrill its last, reviving pagan echoes. Reno, they were saying then, was the ring's last frontier.

And the final spectacle was to be a fight, not between two men, but between two races of men, white and black.

The pressure of the great mob's waiting was almost a tangible thing. It had the feel of men crowding against men. It had the sound of many voices and pounding feet and staccato shouting against a blurred background of incessant noise. It had the odor of hot dust, clothes, human bodies, raw lumber baked in sunlight.

Dumb Julius, with Singer Burke beside him, held a fifty-dollar chair ten feet from the ring-ledge. He sat quietly, arms folded, a straw hat tilted over his eyes.

Singer Burke growled. "Here we go!"

Julius looked steadily up into the ring, smiling a little. An attendant in white sweater and cap leaned over the ropes.

"Oh, Mr. Jordan!" he yelled. Gleason and Tex Rickard were in the ring—Tex coatless, with sleeves rolled up and his Stetson pulled down over his eyes, smoking a stub of cigar. At the far corner, below the platform and looking up into the sun, Julius could see old Billy Jordan shoving through the crowd gathered at the ring steps. Jordan was climbing into the ring. That crowd at the far corner was a crowd

of notables—the game's great and near-great and once-great. " 'Ow does it look from up there, Billy?" Against the blur of the mob's noise, Julius could hear Bob Fitzsimmons yell his grinning falsetto at the announcer. The ringside laughed.

The sun glinted on Jordan's bald head, and his huge voice compelled a hush from the crowd. At the other corner of the ring, the procession of notables began. . . .

John L. Sullivan, William Muldoon, Jake Kilrain, Battling Nelson, Tommy Burns, Jimmy Britt, Abe Attell, Terry McGovern. There were others. Many more. The men paraded into the ring, mitted the crowd, shuffled their feet on the canvas, grinning at each other. Bob Fitzsimmons laughed at the crowd, and black Sam Langford took a mocking bow at the crowd's hooting.

Jordan waved a telegram, read it: "May the best man win!" Jordan bellowed. "That comes from the former lightweight champion of the world, the Old Master, Joe Gans!"

But the mob's applause had grown desultory by then, and some booed the word from Gans. Gans was a black man. The mob had come to see the white race triumph, and to some it did not matter that Joe Gans was home sick on his deathbed.

The mob began to yell at Jordan, shouting him down. The ring swarmed with the men he had called in.

"Let's have the fight!" the mob yelled. "That's enough! Let's have the fight!"

Jordan introduced the referee, at last. Rickard took off his wide hat, handed it down to the ringside and hitched at his belt. His lips rolled nervously at the cigar stub.

A couple of Reno policemen in blue uniforms took posts at the far corner of the platform. Others moved in, guarding the aisle from the dressing rooms. Three or four Nevada state troopers, khaki-clad and wearing Stetsons, strolled along behind the press benches. A Negro boy carrying a huge palm-leaf fan moved from corner to corner of the platform, not certain which corner Jeff would have.

Then Jordan, from the ring, turned and pointed dramatically down the aisle. The mob seethed, stood up, and its roar became a thunder.

Gray-haired Billy Delaney was leading the black champion into the arena—Delaney, who had been Jeff's trainer, and now hated him. The crowd banked the runway, yelling, and the black champion's party hurried down toward the ring. Big Al Kaufman had a hand on Johnson's shoulder, and Stanley Ketchel, seeming very slender in his black sweater, followed along. Sig Hart and the trainers, Burns and Doc Furey, brought up the rear.

"Cold feet, Jack!"

"Now you'll get it!"

"How do you like it now?"

The mob, hostile but excited, yelled at the black man—the mob taunted and cheered at the same time.

Dumb Julius turned, standing to watch as Johnson went by. The Negro passed within a few feet of Julius Brown's chair. Julius saw his huge, lithe figure very clearly, saw the shimmer of violet silk lining on the negro's black bathrobe, saw his face and the look in his eyes.

"He'll kill you, Jack!"

Jack Johnson was laughing.

JULIUS waited, then, the mob in turmoil around him—waited as he had waited, years before, to watch the Big Fellow climb into the ring where he was to fight Sharkey or Fitz or Jim Corbett. In some quiet part of his mind, Julius revived the feel of the rainy night at Coney, of the gale that stirred dust in Coffroth's arena at San Francisco. He waited in a fashion apart from the mob's growing clamor—not feeling the Reno heat, just then, and not seeing the white sky and the rim of desert hills.

Billy Jordan, at the ropes, pointed again suddenly, far out over the ringside. He held his pose. The mob surged up, racking the wooden amphitheatre with sudden dust and tumult. The mob's uproar thundered, and the desert colosseum swayed in the quake of shaken earth.

Jordan kept pointing.

Dumb Julius watched, standing intent in the turmoil, fixing his eyes on the lane where Jeffries would come out.

He saw the Big Fellow, very close to, slowed by the swarming of the crowd. Men left their seats, charged into the opening of the aisle, tried to shake Jeff's hand. The din pounded at him. Jeff pushed his way

along, looking at the floor or turning cagily with his head lowered when he recognized a voice.

The Big Fellow slouched in old clothes, his cap pulled down over his face, his eyes narrowed against the glare. The white sunlight paled his tan, blurred the lines in his face.

Julius watched him, saw him pass by, saw the cops hurry in to shove the crowd away. He saw Jeff go to the steps, put his big left hand, not bandaged yet, on the ring apron and climb up toward the white ropes.

Julius found himself sitting in his chair again, arms folded, looking straight ahead and not seeing anything. Jim Jeffries was in the ring.

Then the minutes ticked slowly.

Jeff's back was toward Julius—Johnson had laughed when Sam Berger wanted to toss for corners. "He'p yo'self," he had said, and Jeff had picked the corner with his back to the sun.

The ring still swarmed with people, and the crowd's clamor grew angry. Johnson stood up once, clenching his bandages and stretching, and Julius saw him look over toward Jeffries without smiling. The black man had quit laughing. Julius saw him squint over at Jeffries, lick his lips nervously.

Julius looked at his watch. It was nearly a quarter to three.

Tex Rickard warned the fighters to hurry. Jeff stood up and began to strip off his old clothes, Berger and black Bob Armstrong helping him. Jeff was wearing purple trunks, cut loose, and a plain belt. Across the ring, Jack Johnson threw off the black bathrobe and sat down again before Julius could get a good look at him. In Jeff's corner, they were lacing on the gloves.

Then Rickard moved about, clearing all but the chief seconds and the announcer out of the ring. Jordan took off his cap again, watched Rickard for the word to go. Tex gave the corners a last glance, nodded at the timekeeper.

The gong began to clang.

"La-dees and gentle-men—"

When Jack Johnson stood up, sleek and black, the sun glinting on his black polished body and shaven scalp, the crowd's outburst had a gasp in it—a gasp of sheer astonishment and awe. But when Jeff's turn came, the applause was a sudden thunder again—direct, fierce, desperately earnest. Billy Jordan waved his arms, and the mob's noise drowned his valedictory roar.

"—an' let 'er go!"

Above the huddle where Tex talked to the men in the center of the ring, Julius Brown could see the big black man's face, entirely serious now. Jack Johnson nodded, frowning a little with the sun in his eyes. He nodded again. Rickard slapped at the men's backs and Johnson smiled suddenly, extending his gloved hands to Jeff. But Jeff would not shake.

Julius watched the Big Fellow walk back to his corner, scowling into the sun. He saw Berger snatch the towel, crawl through the ropes. He saw Jeff look down at the ringside, his face blank in the sun's glare. He saw Jeff's legs braced wide apart, like the legs of a tired man.

Jeffries turned very slowly to meet the Negro.

The bell rang.

Dumb Julius braced himself, then relaxed. Beside him he heard the sudden hiss of Singer Burke's intaken breath.

CHAPTER 12

A HUSH, brief and oppressive. The stealthy, quick shuffle of ring shoes on taut canvas. Then the Big Fellow lunged forward heavily, pawed his long left at the Negro's face. The black man broke back.

The mob's yell volleyed at the ring.

Julius Brown steeled himself against the slow chill tingling in his body. He tried to feel only the thin heat, the smother of the crowd, the insant hammering of the waves of noise. Jim Jeffries was in there now. Dumb Julius wanted to watch, to see it all—knowing, as he watched, that this was the end, and that what he saw then he would never see again.

Inside the ropes, the big men circled each other, crafty-eyed.

The men wrestled and walked about the ring, pushing each other—each holding dynamite in either hand and never letting it go. Rickard barked sharply at them, breaking them out of a clinch. The crowd yelled. The men did not fight. They walked and pushed, watching each other. Johnson

was nervous at first, ducking or slipping more quickly than he needed to when Jeff moved a fist at him. At the bell, though, he tapped the Big Fellow playfully on the shoulder and flashed his golden smile at the crowd.

The second round—the third, then the fourth. . . . The last big fight was on, but Jim Jeffries and Jack Johnson moved slowly in the hot ring, clinching, belting each other around the body. There might be forty-five rounds of it, and neither man would spend himself early. The crowd's noise grew angry, restless.

Dumb Julius ached suddenly for a flash of the old Jeffries fury—for one sweeping, irresistible charge by the man whose iron fists had flattened Old Fitz and smashed Tom Sharkey's ribs. The ache took him by the throat, so that he had to shake his head and look away for a moment.

Burke said, out of the side of his mouth, "It's all right!"

Julius turned to the ring again.

The fourth ended. The fifth began slowly.

And in that slow fifth, Julius Brown saw the beginning of the cruel end—saw it, watched it, took it and went on watching. He saw Jeff swing his heavy fist, saw him smash the Negro with it, high on the head—saw the sly astonishment on Johnson's face.

Jeffries crouched, pawing with his left—then suddenly snapped it in a short arc to the Negro's head. Johnson's head bobbed. The crowd yelled, exultant. But Jack Johnson had felt the Jeffries left, then, knew what it was and knew that it need not worry him. Johnson flicked his own left at the Big Fellow, clinched, went to the ropes with him and winked over his shoulder at the press row.

The mob rose, roaring—Jeff had hit him. The mob had seen Johnson fall into a clinch. The ringside had seen the Negro's wink, and thought he was hurt and bluffing.

Dumb Julius knew better.

That was when Jim Corbett, crawling the ring-ledge behind Jeff's corner, yelled his bitterest taunts at the big black man.

"Faker!" he yelled. "He'll kill you, Jack! Jack! Jack! You're yellow!"

That was when the ringside roared a yell of triumph—men leaping up to shake fistfuls of currency, howling to bet two-to-one on Jeff, three-to-one.

Julius watched.

The fifth ended. Round six.

Jim Jeffries came out for the sixth, turning to laugh at something Berger said, settling confidently into his crouch.

Jack Johnson turned on the power. In that round, the Negro's smooth left hand flashed with a sudden deadliness—though smooth, it cracked viciously when the black man shot it in. Jeff stumbled and rocked back, jarred out of his crouch, and stumbled in again with his right eye swelling. Again Johnson's punch jarred him upright, and while the crowd's yell took a wild edge of panic, Johnson flashed that left again and again. Blood spattered from Jim Jeffries' nose. The Negro did not let up. At the bell, Jeff shook his head, uncertain of his corner. Jeff turned his face in an odd, stupid way, trying to see his corner with his left eye, because the right was blinded.

Julius kept his folded arms tight, holding himself against the pain—steeling himself against foolish hopes that ached in him suddenly.

The Big Fellow rushed like a wounded animal at the gong for the seventh—Dumb Julius winced for him at the hurt of Johnson's left again, swift, repeated, relentless and maddening. Jeff reached the Negro's face, once, his own left flicking out a spatter of blood on the Negro's lips. Johnson laughed as he slipped away. Looking over at the ringside, Johnson stayed just out of reach of Jeffries' rush, pretending to ignore it. Then he turned suddenly, drove his left straight to the Big Fellow's mouth. Jeff rocked back, staggered. Johnson drove in his left again.

Jim Jeffries' face was smeared with red when the bell came—Julius could see him facing into the sun again, moving his lips, talking to his corner. The blood botched what he was saying, made his jabbering look senseless.

"You can still get some Jeffries money. Cover up!" Singer Burke's twisted voice was hoarse.

Julius turned, keeping the hurt to himself, smiling at Singer. He said, "I could not cover—my money's all on Jeff!"

"I got a little," Burke said.

"Keep it."

JEFF rallied again stubbornly in the next round, and the crowd rallied. The mob harried the ring with its uproar—there was desperation in it, but there was hope, too. Johnson clowned, circling the referee after every break and stepping in to belt both hands at the Big Fellow's body, laughing and yelling to Corbett when Jeff punched at him. But Big Jeff lashed out suddenly. He strained in a clinch, his great muscles etched in the fierce light. He tore his hands free, hammered fiercely at the Negro's midriff, drove him back. At the end of the round Jeff was leaning against the black man on the ropes, punching at him. Johnson capped the white man's elbows with his gloves, cutting down the leverage. But the crowd roared.

"By God!" Burke cried. "By God—"

Dumb Julius felt his throat tighten. He looked at the ring through a mist. Jim Jeffries was moving in, now, and Julius knew that he would keep on moving in.

That lump stayed where it was, and the mist remained. Through the ninth round and the tenth, Jeff swung at the black man with all his waning power—Johnson tied him up, pushed him away, smashed him again and again with the left, but Jeff would not back up.

Three times in the eleventh Jack Johnson landed his right uppercut, tearing the white man's head back, shoving his face up into a wrenching glance at the white sky. He spattered the Big Fellow's face with a right-hand smash. He poured in the left, bobbing Jeff's head back, stopping him short again and again. Jeff crowded in. Late in the twelfth, still shuffling forward, Jim Jeffries lashed out both hands in his final desperation, charging in with a last fury—and this time the crowd cheered Jack Johnson. The Big Fellow swung his hands, but the black champion blocked and slipped and sidestepped with swift, intricate speed.

The mob's cheer came suddenly, without volition, wrenched out of it by the black man's magic.

Dumb Julius watched the Big Fellow stand in his corner at the end of the round—Jeff had both hands on the ropes, looked straight into the sun's glare, bulked as huge as he had on that night of the Ruhlin fight when Julius had seen a picture to remember. But this time Jeff sagged a little, spent. His eyes glinted blankly, and the blood blotched his face. His legs gave—he turned very wearily when they shoved the stool under him. He sat down, lolled his head back, and his great shoulders heaved as he wracked for breath.

Julius had another picture to remember, then—a picture seen through a mist, but warm with unyielding gallantry and the glamour of his legend.

The end was not far.

The cruel thirteenth round came and went—Jack Johnson held the Big Fellow's right shoulder, hammered his own right hand into Jeff's battered face—smashed him and hammered him and could not make him go down. He could not make him quit in the fourteenth—could not make him stop or break back. Both Jeff's eyes were puffed to glinting slits, now, and his legs were going. Johnson hit him with everything he had. Jeff's own huge, pawing left was pitiful. But Jeff kept shambling in.

Then the fifteenth. . . .

The black man's finishing one-two only spread-eagled the Big Fellow on the east ropes. He spraddled there, staring helplessly into the sun, gasping and blinded, but not down.

The black fury smothered him with swift, cruel, short punches. He did not go down. Johnson stepped back suddenly, measured, hit.

Jim Jeffries fell, at last.

He went down stubbornly, even then. He clutched blindly at the ropes, trying to stay up. He fell between the top rope and the lower strand, but he went down only to his haunches. Resting on his right elbow, staring blankly through his red mask while the mob roared at him, he reached up his left hand, groped, caught the top rope and pulled himself grimly to his knees.

Tex Rickard waved the Negro away. Rickard counted, looking over his shoulder at the timekeeper.

Jeff pulled bitterly at the rope, lifted himself.

At nine the Big Fellow stood up, caught himself with a numb stagger and reeled toward the black man. Johnson pushed him

away, worked him to the south side of the ring, measured him there.

"Stop it! Stop it!"

The mob was on its feet, the ringside a turmoil where the cops fought savagely against the mob's frantic surge.

DUMB JULIUS plunged swiftly into the welter and slipped through toward the ring platform. Singer Burke fought beside him—burly, savage, intent to get his boss clear of the stampede. Julius clutched at the press bench, deaf to curses, warding off half-punches and shoves.

Clinging to the ring-ledge, Julius Brown saw the towering Negro, his face a mask out of the jungle, now. He saw Jack Johnson's right shoulder jerk twice, viciously. He heard the short impact of the blows.

Jeff was down again—this time on his knees.

Rickard was counting—Julius counted with him. From the mob's maelstrom, Julius looked up into the ring, saw the Big Fellow get up again at nine. This time he lifted himself by the sheer strength of his legs, his arms dangling.

Jack Johnson hit him three times, flush on the jaw—a left, a right, another left.

Rickard got to seven. . . .

Corbett and Sam Berger and Bob Armstrong were in the ring, then, fighting their way into the roped square. Tex Rickard was waving Johnson away, pointing at him, signaling to the mob that Jack Johnson had won. And Jack Johnson was lifting his mitted fists above his head, looking down at the Big Fellow, trying to break out his golden smile.

But Dumb Julius Brown held fast to his post behind the Big Fellow's corner. Singer Burke stood with the cops, and the cops fought the mob away, but Dumb Julius held where he was. In the ringside riot Kid Murray fronted for his boss and Denver Jim Staley looked for Julius, caught sight of him—yelled at him. Dumb Julius did not see the men or hear the taunt. He held fast, watching the ring. He did not see Singer Burke dive at Kid Murray through the swirl of the mob, swinging both fists. The punch-drunk pug went down. As Denver Jim yelled, a policeman clipped at the Singer with his nightstick. But Burke only laughed crookedly, raging in the mob, while blood showed above his ear.

Dust rose into the heat. The mob tramped and shuffled, herding into the arena's bowl and leaving the bleachers gaunt. The ringside riot smouldered into a sullen milling, smothered by the sheer mass of the mob. The sun turned the rising dust into a sultry smoke.

Jim Jeffries got up, at length, testing his tired legs.

Dumb Julius waited.

Jim Corbett was crying. Armstrong, the Negro, helped the Big Fellow with a hand under his armpit. Old Jeff crawled through, slowly, little helped by the shaken men who had backed him. He groped his great left hand downward for some support.

Jim Jeffries left hand stretched out, groping. The bandages were still around it, sweated and bloody.

Dumb Julius Brown reached up for the Big Fellow's hand.

He took Jeff's hand very securely and braced himself to steady the Big Fellow's faltering descent. It was right that he should do that, and he knew that it was right. It was what he had been waiting for. This was his victory, in the end—to give a strength of his own to the great fighting man who had spent himself in defending their legend, keeping its glamour untarnished.

Other men reached out to help. Julius Brown smiled at them, unashamed of the mist in his eyes. It was not the murk of sunlight through the ringside dust that made his face radiant.

Statement required by the Act of August 24, 1912, as amended by the Acts of March 3, 1933 and July 2, 1946 (Title 39, United States Code, Section 233), showing the Ownership, Management, and Circulation of Adventure Magazine, published bi-monthly at Kokomo, Indiana, for October 1, 1951. 1. The names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are: Publisher, Henry Steeger, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York. Editor, Henry Steeger, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York. Managing editor, None. Business manager, None. 2. The owner is: Popular Publications, Inc., 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York, Henry Steeger, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York, Shirley M. Steeger, 205 East 42nd St., New York 17, New York. 3. The known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities are: None. 4. Paragraphs 2 and 3 include, in cases where the stockholder or security holder appears upon the books of the company as trustee or in any other fiduciary relation, the name of the person or corporation for whom such trustee is acting; also the statements in the two paragraphs show the affiant's full knowledge and belief as to the circumstances and conditions under which stockholders and security holders who do not appear upon the books of the company as trustees, hold stock and securities in a capacity other than that of a bona fide owner. Signed, Henry Steeger, Publisher. Sworn to and subscribed before me this 19th day of September, 1951. Eva M. Walker, Notary Public, State of New York. Qualified in New York County, No. 31-9506600. Certificate filed with: City Register N. Y. County. My Commission expires March 30, 1952 (Seal) —Form 3526—Rev. 8-50.

The ship was listing badly now, and he had known for some moments she was going.

By
JOHN RHODES STURDY

DARK

On the night the lights came on all over the world, the commodore fought his darkest battle. . . .

THE night the lights were turned on, the convoy commodore brought the news to the officers' saloon. The officers were surprised to see him, as he seldom visited the saloon at night, preferring to remain in his own cabin, or on the bridge. It was the commodore's first voyage in this ship, and his last, for the Atlantic war was over.

He was a short, stocky little man whose weatherbeaten cheeks were lined with tiny

VOYAGE

red veins. His eyes were faded blue and his eyebrows white and bushy. He still had considerable hair on his head and that was white, too. When he walked he walked like a sailor, and when he talked he talked like one.

His name was Sir Henry Travers Stevenson, and he carried the letters K.C.M.G., C.B., D.S.O. after it. The officers of this merchant freighter were not exactly awe-struck by the name, but it did create something of a barrier between them and the old man. Furthermore, he was a retired rear admiral of the Royal Navy—one of that amazing company of elderly admirals who had come out of retirement at the start of the war to take up appointments in the Royal Naval Reserve and to serve almost six years—those who lived through it—as convoy commodores with the merchant fleets of all the Allies on the North Atlantic.

He was puffing slightly when he entered the saloon. His face was flushed more than usual, and his hand shook as he held out a bit of paper.

"Gentlemen," he said, "this signal has just come in. We're to burn navigation lights from now on."

The officers sat forward suddenly, then relaxed, some with a little sigh. The freighter's captain, seated at the head of a green-covered table said, "Well, so this is it!"

The German war had ended some time before they had cleared New York harbor. Yet, with no assurance that fanatic U-boat commanders were not continuing to prowl the seas, they had sailed in convoy, with blacked-out ships and under naval orders. Now, to burn lights again on the ocean—green to starboard and red to port, and a bright white light at the masthead—this was reality and truth at last.

The paper fluttered in the commodore's hand. "Shall we go up to the bridge, gentlemen? I doubt if any of us would care to miss this rather historic occasion."

He was wearing his R.N.R. uniform with the thick gold braid and the high bank of ribbons. He looked more like an admiral than he had ever looked to these merchantmen, even when he had come aboard the ship at New York, very efficient and peppery, after the captain had announced, with a slight groan, "We're carrying the commodore this trip." His reception had been lukewarm.

Now he glanced around the room, and his eyes rested on Grierson, young and sandy-haired, the ship's fourth officer. Grierson was reading a magazine and paying no attention to the commodore. The old man frowned. He intended to have a talk with Grierson, but there was no time now for that.

"Shall we go up to the bridge?" he repeated. He started for the door and the officers rose.

The night was black and there was no moon. Dimly, the men on the bridge could make out the shape of the ship next in line to them, but nothing more. Even to recognize one another was difficult, although they stood close together. The sea and the wind made the only sounds.

Suddenly came the commodore's voice, giving an order to the radio-telephone operator: "To all ships. Burn navigation lights. Stand by. Execute."

The click of a switch on the bridge went unheard. But suddenly, over the heads of these men, a clear bright light shone from the masthead, piercing the blackness. And then, like colored stars on a Christmas tree, the riding lights of the other ships down the long columns of the convoy cut into the night—red and green and silver—one after another, as though touched off by some magic wand, until the whole ocean seemed to bob with them. They looked fairylike and unreal, a strange vision out of a dream, to men who had almost forgotten. But it was victory.

There was silence on the bridge. The masthead light cast down a soft glow on the faces of the men there. The little commodore stood with his feet apart, braced against the roll of the ship, his eyes looking out over the ocean at the gleaming dots. It would have been easy for a sailor to have read his thoughts. Or those of any of the merchantmen around him. They were thoughts that went back to the pitching deck of a ship in convoy in the wild, black nights of a North Atlantic winter, to storms and gales and battles, and to ships going down in flames and smoke, and men struggling in an angry sea, choked with oil and hard memories.

THE commodore said, so quietly that few heard him, "I think I'll go below now." He stepped into his brightly lit cabin, and immediately went to the deadlight over the porthole and, struggling with the "dogs"—the clamps that held it in place—opened the steel shutter.

He found himself out of breath. He staggered a little, and grasped the side of his bunk for support. A mist had come over his eyes, and he moved unsteadily to his desk and sat down. For several moments he did not move. Then his old hands reached out and touched a leather frame that held two pictures—a woman and two children on one side, and a house on the other.

Surrey. It would be sweet in Surrey now, with the flowers in bloom. And there would be peace. The lights were on in England, like the lights at sea. He would be going home to Surrey again, for good. The last

time had been "for good," he remembered —when he had retired, with a full naval career behind him—but he had left to sail again. Only this time it was certain. This time he was really old. Almost too old.

His head bent forward a little. His hands closed over the frame, and he was breathing hard.

He answered a knock on the door by raising his head and saying, "Come in."

Grierson, the fourth officer, stood in the cabin, holding his cap under his arm.

"I believe you wanted to see me," the young man said. He was straight and tall. His brown eyes were almost hostile.

"See you?" The commodore thought for a moment. "Oh, yes—earlier today. I wanted to have a talk with you, Mr. Grierson."

"What about, sir?"

"Well, things in general. Your attitude, for instance. It's not good for a young officer to take matters into his own hands altogether."

"I obey my captain's orders, sir."

"Well, it's a little more than just obeying the orders you're forced to obey, Mr. Grierson—this attitude I'm talking about. It's cooperation."

The young man's lips were thin. "I give cooperation. At least I try to," he said. "I guess you want the truth. You've called me here, I suppose, to give me hell again. All right, you've done that ever since you came aboard the ship. I do my job. The captain's satisfied with me. I don't know why I should take anything from you lying down. That may be navy style, but I'm merchant service."

The commodore looked at the young man thoughtfully. "You've got a lot of spunk, Mr. Grierson," he said slowly. "That's necessary at sea—spunk, and a great deal of will. I think will is more important."

"If there's any specific complaint, I'd like to hear it," said Grierson. "I'm due on watch shortly."

The commodore bowed his head. His right hand lying on the desk closed suddenly. The veins stood out on his wrist.

Grierson waited. He waited just so long. Then, his anger rising at the old man's continued silence, he suddenly burst out, "Maybe I have no right to say this. Maybe this will finish me on the ship. I'm a fourth officer, about the lowest thing in the merchant service. But I'm just wondering if you're not just mad at the whole bloody world because your job is over and you're through."

Getting no answer, he turned and walked out of the cabin. The commodore slowly raised his head. The red on his cheeks had turned into sickly-looking spots of purple. The ribbons on the breast of his jacket rose and fell. In his eyes was an expression that might have stopped Grierson had he seen it.

With great labor the old man got to his feet. He dragged across the cabin, his hands out in front of him, groping for support. He just made his bunk. He collapsed full length on to it, with his face down. The only movement from his body came from the heavy, irregular breathing.

HE COULD not get up the following morning. When the steward arrived with his cup of tea, he had turned over on his back, but he was still wearing his uniform and his face was a ghastly color. The steward was frightened, and the teacup clattered when he put it down on the desk. At that the commodore opened his eyes.

"Ah, steward!" he said, with an effort. "Must have been very tired. Forgot to take my jacket off."

He tried to sit up. But he didn't quite make it. The steward put one arm around the commodore's shoulders and supported him.

"You're ill, sir," the steward said. "I think you'd better lie down, sir. I'll call the captain."

"No." He rested against the steward's arm. "I'll be all right in a moment or so. Soon as I've had my tea. Pass it to me, please."

He supported himself with his hands and the steward released him. The man brought the cup of tea and the commodore sipped the hot liquid.

"Feel better already," he said cheerfully. But he was not better. And he could not get out of the bunk. Still, the steward left him and he lay back with his head on the pillow.

He had half expected the attack. In fact he had been fighting against it since New York. Probably he should have called

a doctor there, but he had been afraid. He had wanted to make the last voyage on his own. In his own ships. He wanted to see England. He wanted to go to Surrey and his home, now that peace was here. And the doctor might have kept him.

He bit his lip suddenly. Weakness was creeping over him, a strange weakness that he had never known before.

Of course, the captain, coming to see him almost immediately, would not listen to his denials. At noon a young doctor arrived. He wore a navy uniform and had been transferred by sea-boat from one of the escorting frigates. He was very young, but he went about his business thoroughly, and then he said, "Rest for you, sir. Lots of it."

The commodore had no way of knowing the conversation that took place later in the ship's saloon between the young surgeon and the captain and several of the officers.

"He's very bad," the doctor said. "Heart, of course. I rather think he must have put up quite a battle even to get aboard the ship."

"I hardly believe that," said the captain. "He's been too active."

"Much too active," said Grierson from a corner.

The doctor looked at Grierson. He smiled. "Oh—not exactly the chummy sort, I gather?" He stuck his stethoscope into his hip pocket. "Well, he's rather old, and probably his sickness made him testy. Look—I'm making a guess, but when we turned on the lights last night, I imagine that did it. He's been running for nearly six years at an age when most men have knocked off. And suddenly the strain was over. Possibly he relaxed for a moment, let himself go. And he just collapsed. It happens, you know."

From the corner, Grierson was looking at the young doctor. The book the fourth engineer was reading slipped from his lap. He did not bother to pick it up.

"He may die," the doctor said. "I rather think he knows that. I suggested we transfer him to my ship. Well, if he did pass out, I thought—well, a navy ship. But he refused to move. He said this was his ship."

When the doctor turned to leave the saloon, Grierson rose. He moved quickly across the room and, in the alleyway outside the door he touched the doctor's shoulder.

"Wait a minute," he said. "I want to talk to you."

LYING in his bunk, the commodore's thoughts were echoing some of the doctor's words. For he believed now that he was dying. He had never realized before how tired he was. He remembered the smoky rooms at convoy conferences, and how sometimes he had literally forced himself to get to his feet when the talking was over. He remembered the painful effort of climbing to the bridge of freighters, in gales and snow and ice, and standing with his face to the biting wind, and gripping the binnacle to keep from falling down.

It was easy to lie here, with the deadlight open at the port, and no strain any more, and all the lights on.

He wondered what the ship's officers were saying about him. Or did they care that much? Probably he had been too severe, too much navy. He had not got to know any of them very well, not even the captain. He wondered what that young Grierson was thinking. Probably that he was through on the ships. He was a good boy. Maybe he shouldn't have belabored Grierson so. But age was impatient with youth, which was unfortunate, as youth was impatient with age. Most likely his attitude had taught Grierson nothing, only antagonized him to the point of not giving a damn. He wished he could have taught Grierson something out of his experience. But he was bedridden now and it was too late.

He slept. When he awoke, the light of day had vanished through the porthole, and by that he knew it was night. He shifted a bit, bringing his face toward the narrow shelf that bordered the inward side of his bunk. Then he noticed something. Standing on the ledge was the leather frame that contained the pictures of his family and his home. He stared at it for several moments. He was certain that he had not moved the frame, that it had been on his desk last night and this morning.

Someone else had moved it. He thought first of the steward, but he decided against

that possibility. Perhaps one of the officers. It suddenly occurred to the commodore that whoever had moved the picture frame to his side had been a man with understanding and kindness in his heart. A warm feeling crept through the old sailor. Someone aboard this ship liked him, liked him well enough to have made this little gesture toward him.

He lay back, a smile playing on his lips. That was good, he thought. That was the way he wanted things to be. In the Navy he had always left a command hoping that his crew would miss him. And this was a small thing, but important, because it came from someone in a strange ship, a merchant ship. He smiled, and he felt better.

The crash was unmistakable. It came with the suddenness of a cannon shot; a great rending, tearing noise that shook the ship to her keel. It had the swift impact of a torpedo, but there was no explosion, and the commodore, who had survived two torpedoings, knew instantly that it was not that. Even as the furniture in his cabin shook and banged, even as the lights went out and the room was plunged into terrible darkness, he realized that a collision had occurred.

He felt his bunk rock under him, and he grasped the bunkhead for support. The picture frame on the ledge fell over on his chest. In the darkness he heard the thunder of steel against steel, the rip and groan of torn plates grinding onto one another, and above him the scurry of heavy boots, *thump, thump* on the deck.

The ship rolled far over. To his ears came more s o u n d s of rending steel. Through it he heard a siren blow hysterically. His head was jammed against the top of his bunk and he put up his arms to hold himself off.

The ship rolled back, over the horizontal line, over to port. He held on to the bunkhead as his body shifted.

She did not come back this time. A list was on her and the sounds that he heard now were vague and muffled, but in his mind he knew what was happening up there. Perhaps they were trying to work the pumps. But more likely they were putting out the boats. The ship had been hit badly.

He lay on his back, staring into the darkness. The lights had gone out, he thought, and that was bitterly ironic. He had turned them on, only to have them go out again, in the ship and in his body.

Somewhere on the ledge beside his bunk was a flashlight. He groped around with a hand and found it. A white beam shone over the disheveled cabin. His other hand touched the picture frame.

His fingers tightened. Something inside him surged up into his throat. He couldn't die here. He c o u l d n' t die in a bunk, stretched out helpless on his back. There was something better than that, something better than to wait for it, to accept it without a struggle.

"No!" he shouted, but the cry was soundless.

He laid the lighted flashlight by his side and rolled over against the bunkhead. With a terrible effort that raced his heart, he got his feet over the edge. Then he dropped to the deck, clinging desperately with his hands. For a moment he thought he was going to faint. His chest seemed too small for his lungs. But he hung there, and gradually he lifted himself to his feet. With one hand he reached for the flashlight and the leather picture frame. He got the frame into his pocket.

He braced himself and waited for his pounding heart to relax a little. The ship was listing badly now, and he had known for some moments that she was going down. The sounds up top were diminishing.

He started for the door. He staggered against the far bulkhead, slipped halfway to his knees, and clung to a towel rack. There was a great singing noise in his head.

He started forward again. He got through the doorway and into the alley, and then he pitched forward and fell on his face. He lay there, perhaps for a minute. It was easy to rest. It was easy to cushion his bursting head against the cold steel.

But he couldn't. He forced himself to his hands and knees. The effort was terrible. He wanted to lie down again, but that was not the way.

Slowly he started to crawl, a few killing inches at a time. The flashlight rolled away from him. He kept crawling.

A light shone sharply in his face. He

went down on his elbow, and swayed there. There was a scurry of boots down the passageway, and he felt arms around his chest, and he looked up.

"We haven't any time to lose, sir," a voice said.

He saw Grierson's face in the light of a torch. He forced sound out through his dry lips.

"She's sinking. Get out."

The arms tightened.

"Navy!" was all Grierson said. In an insubordinate manner, too. His face was steaming with sweat. "Get your arms around my neck. We've been rammed amidships. We've got to make the foc's'le."

The commodore felt himself being lifted. He got an arm around the young man's neck. His feet felt numb, but he managed to stand.

"We're going now," said Grierson.

They staggered forward, the beam of the flashlight leading them. The commodore tried desperately to keep his head up.

He heard Grierson's voice, as though from a far distance, although the young man's face was almost touching his. And Grierson was saying, "Before we try to make it, I want to say I'm sorry. Do you understand me, sir?"

The commodore was unable to nod. Fleeting thoughts, pictures, scenes, were running through his aching brain. None of them were very clear—they ran into one another—but there was the home in Surrey, there was his wife, the picture frame. He knew now it was Grierson who had moved the picture frame.

They were on deck. They were at the rail. The commodore could hardly see, but he heard voices shouting. "Grierson! Grierson! Here's the raft! Hurry, Grierson, she's going to roll!"

The commodore felt himself falling through space. Only the touch of Grierson was solid, and the man's arm around his waist. And then there was something cold gripping him. In a half-conscious way he knew that it was water. The pictures were wiped from his reeling brain.

HE CAME out of the blackness slowly. The cold feeling had gone, and he felt warm. He could not move, but his eyes opened and he looked up at a deckhead. He was somewhere in a ship, in a bunk. Perhaps if he turned over, the picture frame would be there on the ledge. But gradually he realized that this was not his cabin.

He heard voices.

"How is he now, Doc?"

That was Grierson.

"He should be dead," a strange voice answered.

"Will he pull through?"

"I don't know. He's got a slight chance. It all depends on whether he has the will to live."

And Grierson again, his voice suddenly almost angry. "The will to live! Listen, Doc, you and I—we don't know what the will to live means. Do you know how I found him when I went to get him? He was on his hands and knees — crawling! The will to live—Doc, if that's it, he'll live!"

The commodore stared at the deckhead. His cracked lips twisted into a smile. *All right, Mr. Grierson,* he said silently. *All right, Mr. Grierson, I won't let you down.*

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—By Carl Lane

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Though they walked together, each man was alone, for this was a—

JOURNEY INTO FEAR

By

CHICK MANWARING

COURTNEY realized with a shock that sent a crawling sensation up his back that he was afraid—deathly afraid of the man walking a few paces in front of him through the snow.

Watching those broad shoulders of Slade's bobbing up and down these last few days, Courtney had become aware of many things he didn't like. It was a feeling he'd kept shoving back, but it's intimate expression had finally broken through in spite of himself.

The snow was shallower now. They were getting down out of the high mountains and were approaching the wind-swept lower range. Barren and sparsely timbered, it was populated with little game and a few roving wolf packs. Much could happen, Courtney thought, before they reached the mining camp on the far side of the mountains, a hundred miles away.

In spite of his newly-discovered fear, Courtney felt anger growing in him as he

Courtney said with forced calmness, "We split up here, Slade, and —don't try anything!"

watched the steady, tireless stride of Slade. He could not match the pace the other man was setting, and he found himself almost running at times to keep up. It must be long past time for their hourly break, he thought.

"Slade," he panted, "let's rest a minute."

Slade stopped and turned around. His bearded face showed no expression. Only his dark eyes seemed alive, and they had a look in them that Courtney found hard to define. It could be mockery, or hate, or both. He said nothing, merely slipped the pack straps off his shoulders and sat down at the base of a stunted pine.

Courtney slipped down onto the hard-crusted snow without removing his pack. He used it as a pillow and, lying back, stretched out his legs. He was a tall, slim man in his middle twenties, a little soft from easy living. He lay there, drawing the stinging, cold air into his lungs, trying to regain his wind. His legs were sore and aching and his shoulders, where the pack straps had gouged, were raw and blistered.

"How far have we come, Slade?"

Slade reached into his pocket and pulled out his pipe and a plug of tobacco. "Not far enough," he grunted.

Courtney watched him, knowing exactly what was to come. He had seen this deliberate man prepare his pipe for smoking hundreds of times in the last three months. It never varied. Slade was like that. Slow and methodical, with never a wasted motion.

First he unwrapped the bit of tobacco, then, drawing his hunting knife, he shaved exactly three slivers of tobacco off and tamped them into his pipe. Clamping the pipe stem between his teeth, he rewrapped the tobacco and put it back in his pocket. He wiped the knife carefully on his pants and put it in his scabbard. Then standing up, he lit his pipe, put his pack on his shoulders and stood staring down at Courtney without speaking.

Courtney sat up with an effort, impatience overriding the fear he felt of this man. "Good Lord, Slade, do you do everything from habit?"

"Why not?"

Courtney got to his feet painfully. "You're a funny duck," he said. "All the time we've been together, you've never spoken unless I've spoken first. A man doesn't know what's going on in your mind." He adjusted the galling pack straps a little to ease his shoulders. "Don't you get tired of being a sphinx? Don't you ever say anything? Can't you talk about the weather—or whether your feet hurt—or—" Courtney paused, trying to control his voice which was rising higher with each word he spoke.

Slade's face was expressionless, and anger rose again in Courtney. "Can't you even talk about what you're going to do with your share of—" he nodded to the pack on Slade's back.

Slade stared at him, his eyes dark and unreadable. Then without a word, he turned abruptly and began his mile-eating stride again.

Courtney stared after him a moment, and then fell in behind him, his eyes fixed again on those broad bobbing shoulders, trying to keep his mind only on the crunching rhythm of their boots in the snow.

THAT night they camped on the banks of the Tampalais River. Courtney threw his pack carelessly in the snow and began to gather wood for the fire. He knew without looking what Slade would be doing. First he would hang both their packs on a tree, then, carefully, he'd measure out the exact amount of food and tea for the two of them. And he'd have the fire started and the food cooking, Courtney knew, before he could get back with his first armload of wood.

The man was capable, Courtney admitted grudgingly to himself. He hadn't been wrong about that when he'd put his proposition to Slade three months before. He'd known nothing about him, and nobody in the small mining town where he'd met Slade had seemed to know much more. But he was obviously an old-timer, and he claimed to know the country where Courtney's information put the new strike. Courtney had decided to take a chance, and had put up the money for their gamble to find gold against the other man's experience.

It had paid off. They'd had to strip down to the barest essentials for the trip back, in order to carry the heavy stuff in

their packs. A rich pocket which had petered out fast—but enough for both of them. Or so he'd thought until lately.

Lately, sharing the same fire, and their rapidly dwindling supply of food with this taciturn man night after night, and being unable to fathom what went on in his mind, he'd begun to wonder.

He threw the wood near the fire and sat down to wait while Slade did the cooking. When they were ready, Slade dished out the meager helping of frozen beans and bacon and the steaming tin cup of tea. They ate in silence, and afterward sat near the fire.

"Slade, how much will we get for the gold?"

The older man looked at him a moment before answering. The shadows from the fire playing on his face, accentuated the hard lines about his eyes and brought out the prominence of his bony nose and jaw. A tough man, Courtney decided, who would stop at nothing to get what he wanted.

"Thirty thousand," Slade said, "more or less."

"That'll be fifteen thousand apiece. Not bad for less than three months' work. Eh, Slade?"

Slade stared at him, his eyes narrowing. He seemed to be thinking—calculating. He nodded.

Courtney lit a cigarette, his hand not quite steady. Glad it was too dark for Slade to notice. Too dark for him to see what must be showing in his eyes. He let out his breath and breathed deeply again, trying to relax.

There was no sound except the crackling and hissing of the green pine wood in the fire, and the far cry of wolves in the timber. Courtney watched Slade staring somberly at the flames, his thoughts his own. The man wasn't human. It wasn't natural for anyone to talk as little as he did—and his eyes were always watching him. Courtney shivered. Those eyes always seemed to be gauging him, measuring his strength—why? There was only one reason Courtney could think of. Men had been killed for less than he was carrying in his pack.

He got up and spread his sleeping bag across from Slade. "Guess I'll hit the sack," he said. He placed his rifle alongside him and pulled off his boots and crawled into the bag.

He watched Slade as the big man finished his pipe, and stood up slowly. He put more wood on the fire and finally crawled into his sleeping bag. Soon his heavy breathing told Courtney he was asleep.

Gradually the tension left Courtney's body, and he wondered briefly if he could possibly be wrong about Slade. Imagining something that wasn't there—but the man had talked even less since they'd found the gold than he had before. It wasn't natural. And the way he stared at him constantly, with something hidden deep in his eyes—smoldering now, but ready to break into flame at any minute. Courtney lit a cigarette, drawing the soothing smoke deeply into his lungs. He had to relax, had to have sleep. . . .

He awakened suddenly in the heavy darkness, warning bells clanging in his head. His palms grew moist as he lay there without stirring, trying to orient himself. The fire was a faint glow of coals in front of him. He raised his head a little and adjusted his eyes to the night. Without moving his head, he focused his gaze on the sleeping bag across the fire from him. It was empty. His eyes swept the outer darkness near the fire. He saw the dark figure of Slade standing not ten feet away from him.

Courtney reached out cautiously until his hand touched his rifle. He tried to keep his voice steady and matter of fact, and raised up on one elbow and said, "What's the matter?"

Slade stirred to life then, making a great show of putting wood on the fire before answering. Then he said only one word. "Wolves."

Courtney watched until Slade was back in his sleeping bag, before he lay down again, and he kept his hand on his rifle. Out in the timber he could hear the hungry howling of the wolf pack. He had lost all desire for sleep, and even after Slade's regular breathing told him he was asleep again, he lay there wide awake until the first streaks of dawn showed through the trees.

They ate a hasty breakfast of warmed-over beans and bacon and hot tea. Courtney was first to be ready this morning.

He cinched his pack tight and slung it over his shoulder before Slade was ready. Slade finally got his pack on and lit his pipe. He looked at Courtney steadily a moment before speaking.

His eyes were half closed and masked from the smoke from his pipe, as he said, "You take the lead today, Courtney."

Panic rose in Courtney's chest at the thought of walking helplessly in front of this man. He drew in great lungfuls of the bitter cold air. He glanced down at the rifle in his hand, and it seemed to be a useless toy to him.

"No," he said, his voice sounding loud in his own ears, "I'll stay behind. It's easier—I mean I feel better behind you—I—"

He stopped suddenly, realizing how he must sound to the other man. There was an awkward silence, and Courtney glanced again at his rifle. Why should he be afraid—he was a fair shot. He couldn't miss a man as big as Slade at this distance.

"No," he repeated, "I'll follow you."

Slade stared at him for several seconds. Then he shrugged and turned to go, leading the way at a slower pace than usual.

ALL that morning, Courtney stayed several paces behind, never taking his eyes off that broad back for an instant, his hand gripping his rifle tightly. He stumbled once on a root in the snow, so intently was he watching for treachery. But even while getting back on his feet, his gaze never left Slade, nor did his grip relax on the rifle.

They stopped at noon for a cold lunch and Courtney stretched out in the snow after eating, for a moment's rest and a cigarette. He turned on his side and saw that Slade was staring at him again. His lips were tight, his jaw thrust out at an unpleasant angle and his eyes were hard and cold beneath half closed lids.

Courtney scrambled to his feet. "We'd better go."

Slade got up slowly without a word and started down the canyon they'd entered this morning.

By late afternoon the sun had melted the snow underfoot into a wet slush, pulling at their boots heavily with each step they took. Courtney's legs were aching from fatigue. He looked at Slade, seemingly tireless ahead of him, and couldn't keep the resentment out of his voice when he said, "Let's rest, Slade. I'm not made of iron, you know."

Slade stopped and faced him. "Better get out of the canyon first." He pointed to the water dripping from a large boulder. "Thawing—liable to be rock slides."

"The hell with them," Courtney said wearily. "I'm going to rest." He slumped down on the wet ground.

Slade stood there a moment, then shrugged and sat down.

Courtney smoked two cigarettes, waiting in vain for Slade to break the silence. Finally he forced himself on his feet.

"Okay," he said, "Let's go."

He fell in behind the big man, his boots squishing in the snow. Damn such a man, anyway. Never a word more than necessary. His mouth closed as tight as a steel trap all day. What went on in his mind? What thoughts were going through him now? He almost bumped into Slade as he stopped suddenly and pointed silently ahead of them.

It was no surprise to Courtney when he saw the mountain of rock and dirt blocking their path in the narrow canyon. Nothing would surprise him on this trip, he thought bitterly, not even a few thousand tons of rock in their path.

Slade sat down on a nearby boulder and Courtney looked at him with an unreasonable irritation. The man's very calmness was a barb in his side.

"Damn it, man," he said, the anger in his throat thickening his words, "don't just sit there like a warthog! Say something. What the hell do we do now?"

A dull red mounted into Slade's face. He got to his feet jerkily, his face set in hard, tough lines.

He said flatly, "Maybe you talk too much."

Courtney felt another quick upsurge of rage, but his teeth clamped together. He could see a little muscle jumping in Slade's forehead as he took a step toward him.

Courtney raised his rifle. "I'm a good shot, Slade."

Slade stopped, and his eyes were dark with anger. "I could break you in two, rifle or no rifle."

Courtney said with forced calmness,

"But you won't try it." He stepped back a pace, wanting more distance between them. "We split up here, Slade, and—don't try anything."

Slade watched him a moment, his lips tight. He seemed to regain control over himself again.

"Sure," he said slowly, "we split up here — for keeps." Without hesitation then, he turned and began to ascend the pile of rock and debris.

Courtney watched him as he crept cautiously up until he was halfway to the top. It would take only one of those huge boulders to jar loose and crush him like an ant. The canyon slope to the side didn't look nearly as bad. He began climbing it slowly. If a man were careful there shouldn't be much chance of a slide. And the going was certainly easier. Probably Slade had risked the tougher route to work off the anger in him. Or perhaps he'd had the idea of rolling a boulder down on him as he came up. That would certainly be the simple way of doing it. Maybe by taking this way up, Courtney thought with satisfaction, he had spiked Slade's guns. For this time, at least.

The side of the canyon was slippery with half-melted snow, and the footing was treacherous with small slides starting behind him as he got closer to the top. It was nothing to worry about, Courtney assured himself, a man had to be careful, that was all. He paused once in his climb to glance over at the slide. He could see Slade sitting on top watching him.

HE WAS almost to the top when he heard an ominous grinding sound from above. He looked up quickly and saw a mountain of dirt and rock hurtling toward him. He threw himself against the side of the slope, under a slight overhang and clutched desperately for support, closing his eyes and burying his head in the dirt.

He felt a shower of dirt and rocks hit his legs and the avalanche swept past and over him, the overhang saving him from injury. He opened his eyes and watched as the slide, increasing in size and sound, settled in the bottom of the canyon with a final sullen crash.

Courtney saw that below him now, there was a sheer drop-off instead of the gradual slope he'd climbed a few minutes before. He looked above him and fear surged into him. The slide had swept away all handholds above as well as below. There was a sheer thirty feet above him to the top. He was trapped on this narrow ledge. To try to climb up or down would be suicide.

He glanced over toward where Slade had been sitting a few moments before, but he was gone. He edged in closer to the canyon wall and grasped its shrubbery firmly. There was nothing he could do alone, and Slade certainly wouldn't risk his neck to get him out. He lit a cigarette and drew the smoke in gratefully.

He finished smoking slowly, forcing back the panic rising in him. He flipped away the butt of his smoke and watched it spiral far below him out of sight. He shifted his position a bit and the ledge shook a little from his weight as he moved. It was likely to let loose at any minute. He grasped the bush again and tried to keep the fear out of his voice.

"Slade," he yelled, "Slade!"

His voice sounded thin and high in his own ears. He listened for some answer, but all he could hear was the distant sound of a rock rolling down the incline to one side of him, and the heavy pounding of his heart in his chest.

"Slade!" he yelled again.

There was no answering shout, and Courtney felt the tears of rage and helplessness rise in his eyes.

"You butchering heel!" he screamed at the top of his voice, hoping that Slade, wherever he was, could still hear him. "You damned murderer—I hope you never get back alive—I hope you die like the rat you are—you filthy—"

It was then that the rope came snaking over the cliff, hanging within inches of his startled eyes.

The surprise of it almost made him lose his hold. He began to tremble, and he closed his eyes tightly and then opened them again to see if they were playing tricks on him. The rope was still there, and the calm, unhurried voice of Slade came down to him from above.

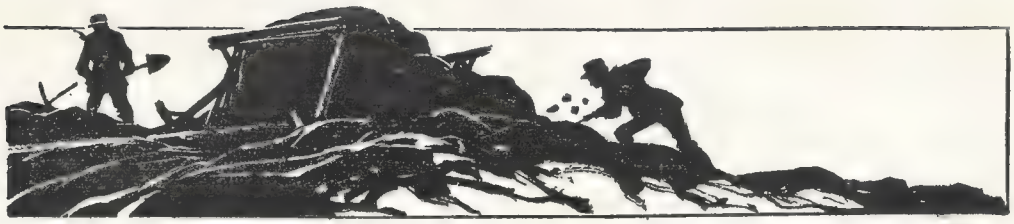
"Tie the rope around you."

Courtney drew a deep breath and doubled the rope around his wrist. He felt the slack leave the rope and tighten

(Continued on page 113)

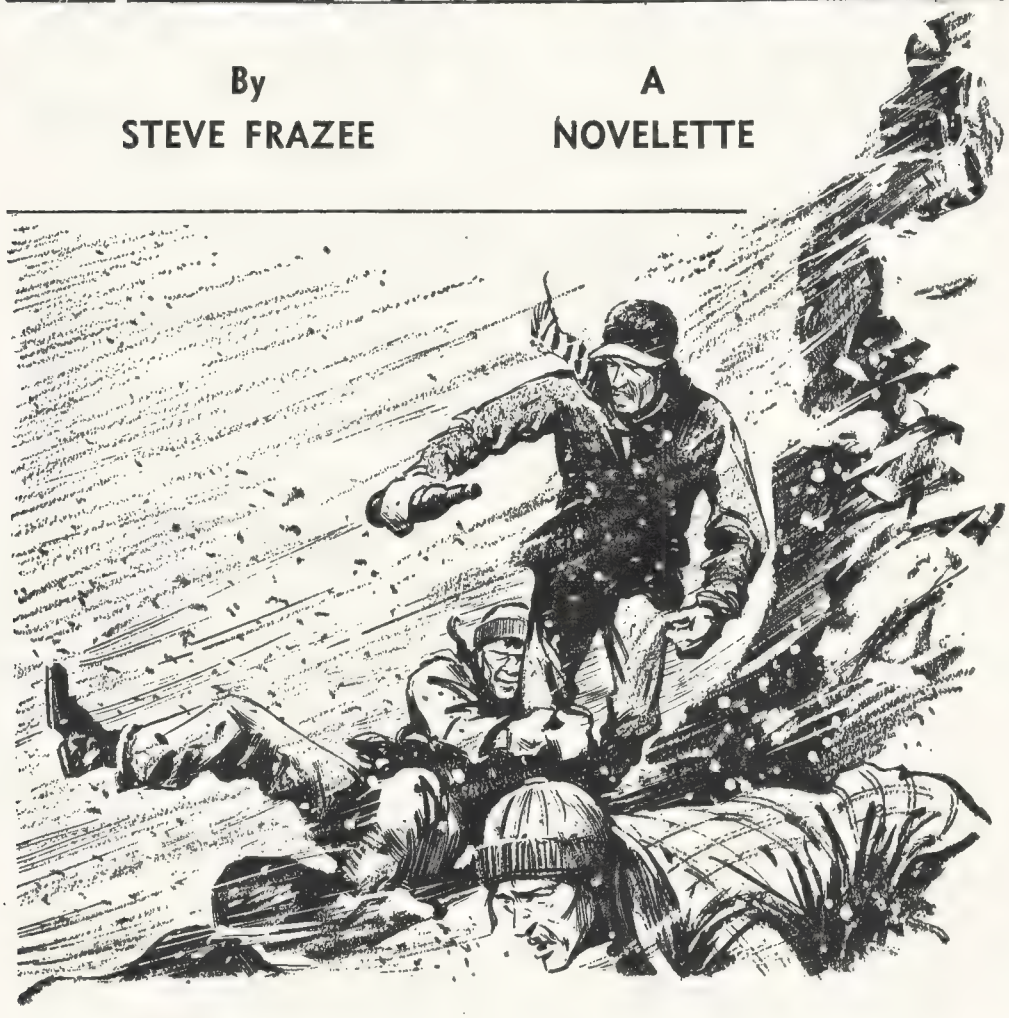
HELL-HIGH

I was stepping over Fulgham when he grabbed at my knees. . . .



By STEVE FRAZEE

A NOVELETTE



WE WEREN'T getting to the High Queen any too soon. Here above the Pit the stretch of trail we had sculptured with steel and dynamite was already slanting with snow. The wind swooping along the mountain to meet us was not the thundering power it would be later when it roared along the spine of Colorow for days and nights and weeks, but it was carrying its load of ice with bitter force, biting at our faces, streaking tears along our cheekbones.

I did not like this stretch.

The trail was a yard wide, the outer edge hanging eleven hundred vertical feet above the sloping north wall of the Pit, a vaguely outlined chasm from which an updraft dueled with gravity to keep snow crystals tossing in the air before us.

We were about a half mile from the mine.

Jacob Le Fevre was behind me, his thin, gray face turned a trifle sidewise to the drive of wind and snow. He was too old for a winter at the High Queen. Le Fevre had high-altitude dizzy spells harder than a man should, and his stomach sometimes gave him trouble, but he would be all right as soon as we reached the mine.

Everything would be all right, I told myself, when we reached the High Queen. Even young men had dizzy spells that turned them white before their bodies grew used to living at 13,700 feet, and I had considered Le Fevre's insides before hiring him this second winter. The little trouble his stomach might give had been outweighed by other considerations—he was a dependable miner and he knew how to leaven the bitterness and tension that settles on men who live too interdependently together.

Le Fevre would help balance the surge of wild young blood—my brother, Danny Troxell's, and Bob Fulgham's—the thick-lipped boomer I had been forced to take when an older miner looked at the metallic-gray sky above Colorow and said he thought he'd stay in Camp Washington this winter, thank you.

"I'll rest a minute now, Craig," Le Fevre said.

He leaned against the mountain, his right elbow presed against his side. Blue-white particles lodged in the long creases of his clean-shaven cheeks, clung there and melted, while I wondered how such dead-looking skin could hold heat enough to melt ice. He blinked his eyes and steadied himself with one mittened hand against the rock, and tried to pass his resting off as fatigue.

I moved close to him on that three-foot ledge and we stood there several minutes pressed against cold rock where snow was gathering in the drill marks of two summers ago, with snow whipping alongside the mountain to stab our cheeks, with snow tossing before us above the Pit. I knew what he was going through and didn't want to press him, for he knew as well as I what it would mean if the storm increased enough to blind us.

"Hotzendorf was smart when he went up with the last jack-train four days ago," Le Fevre said. "Careful, canny Hotsy—leave it to him."

"Yeah," I said. "Hotsy was smart all right."

But I wasn't thinking of Hotzendorf, the little German with eyes as blue as limestone spawls from a freshly shattered wall. I was thinking of his wife, Eudora, with smoke-gray, candid eyes as innocent as a kitten's—wondering why she had married him, wondering how it could be that Hotzendorf didn't know about her. It must be that he didn't. It had better be that way.

She wouldn't miss Hotzendorf during the six winter months when wind was roaring over him at the High Queen.

Only hours ago in another world where it probably wasn't snowing now, she had walked up beside me as I stood in the morning sunshine, scowling across the street at Mack's Saloon, wondering if I would lose both Danny and Fulgham by going in to drive them out before they thought they'd had enough to last them through the winter.

"You'll take care of Hotsy, won't you, Mr. Troxell?" she asked. "He's all I have, you know."

I barely glanced into those innocent gray eyes. Hotsy was all she had—and Jay Cottrell, superintendent of the Bull Domingo mill—and Nyack, the young engineer at the Free Silver—and my kid brother Danny, who had learned far too much in eighteen years.

"There's a wire from the cabin to the High Queen portal," I told her. "Hotsy—and the rest of us—won't fall off the mountain even in the worst storm."

She knew how to react to the tone. Her eyes gathered false hurt the same way they could summon innocence. I left her standing there and walked into Mack's Saloon, hoping that Fulgham or Danny would give me trouble about getting started.

They didn't. By now they would be at the mine, working on the quart they had sneaked with them. That would be their last drinking for six months—and for six month I had Danny safely away from that woman.

Le Fevre pushed himself away from the mountain. "Let's hit it another lick," he said.

WE STRUCK into the wind again, going up a narrow trail that loaded burros could not travel.

Not two hundred feet ahead we found Danny and Fulgham sitting down, their

boots stuck out in space. Between them was a quart bottle of whiskey, nearly two thirds gone. They looked at us with the mentally-drained expression of men who know they are helpless. Danny should have known about high altitude and whiskey.

I reached across Fulgham's legs and took the bottle and began to rap him upon the shins. I cursed him. He drew his knees toward his chest. Stupidity went from his eyes and anger entered. He wanted to fight. Here in the storm, with snow slanting almost to the edge above the Pit he would have fought, but he couldn't rise to do it. His hands slipped off the frozen rock when he tried to push himself up, and he sat down heavily with his boots thrust out into space once more.

". . . knock hell out of you!" he said.

Danny gave me a drunken, leering smirk and said, "Tired. We're tired. Go 'way, Craig."

I looked at Le Fevre. He wiped a mitten across his thin nose and squinted against the snow to see where the trail reached slide rock a hundred yards ahead. There was no doubt that the storm was getting worse.

"Try to make Danny crawl," Le Fevre said.

I was stepping over Fulgham when he grabbed at my knees. He wasn't angry now—he was giggling like an idiot. He wanted to wrestle. He had me by one leg and was trying to pull me down. I kicked him hard in the ribs with my heel and he let go, saying, "Sorehead, huh? The boss is a dirty sorehead."

"Crawl, Danny," I said. "Crawl out of here."

He wanted to go back, he said. Nobody could abuse his friend, Bob. Brother or no brother, I could take the Queen and go to hell with it. He was quitting right now.

With the toe of my boot, slick and shiny from the cold, I began to pinch the flesh of his thigh against the rock he sat on. He squirmed and cursed me as the pain went through slack nerves to a brain robbed of oxygen and sanity, but he scrambled to his knees and started to crawl, and I had to grab the tail of his wool coat to keep him from rolling off the ledge.

He crawled.

Something bumped the back of my legs. I glanced behind me quickly, turning my head toward the mountain instead of the other way. Fulgham was crawling too, snarling at my legs. He was a bear, he said, a grizzly bear, the biggest, meanest one in the mountains. Behind Fulgham Le Fevre was walking in a stooping posture, hands extended to grab if he had to.

I kicked Danny a few times when he hesitated. He cursed me thickly and crawled on, and when we reached slide rock where the trail was wider, where a man could roll but not fall a thousand feet, from anger that quickly swamped relief I kicked Danny so hard with the side of my boot that he pitched forward on his face.

"My brother—my nice big brother," he muttered, and lapsed into a drunken, happy stupor.

Fulgham was lying on his side, his loose lips bubbling as he tried to sing. Le Fevre was sitting down, his hands in his face, the cords of his lean neck showing inside the upturned collar of his ragged sheepskin coat.

I was trembling and fighting nausea. From the day we'd finished that ledge route I'd never used it, because I was deathly afraid of deep space below me. Only the storm and my fear of Le Fevre's knowing my fear had driven me to come that way today.

Snow was coming thickly now and the wind was howling.

I prodded Danny. "Get up!"

He didn't mutter. He didn't move.

"Jake!" I yelled.

Not completely removing his hands from his face, Le Fevre turned toward me. His eyes were dark with vertigo. His lower jaw was slack.

"I'll rest a minute," he said.

The trail ahead was hard to see. Behind, the banshee wind meeting the updraft from the Pit was twisting the snow in spiraling sheets that obscured the rib around which we had just come. The Pit itself was just a part of whiteness indiscernible from the rest.

I knelt and began to shake Danny, only then realizing that I still held the quart of whiskey. I tossed it aside. It struck where snow was catching in the slide rock, it skidded, clinked and did not break.

Two hands slapping Danny's face roused him only enough to make him move his arms. I shook him. I shouted. He did not

hear. With panic clawing at my back I peered again at the trail ahead. Beyond the slide rock it followed a rounding bench that ran a mile just under the mountain crest until a sheer drop chopped it off. Somewhere on the steep slope that led from the bench to the wind-rasped summit the High Queen lay, less than a half mile from us.

There were no cairns thrusting high to mark the place to turn upward from the bench. One lichen-mottled rock looked exactly like another. The trail must even now be hidden by snow, and the mine buildings anchored to the slope would be invisible more than twenty feet away.

For a few moments I stared into the driving whiteness, and without a sound raged against the unfairness of it—that I at twenty-one should be trapped here in the rocks a thousand feet above timberline, burdened with a sick man and two sodden, helpless brutes. During those moments I was a human animal with none of the artificially nurtured credos of duty, unselfishness and honor. Instinct told me to rise and strike out for myself.

I began to slap Danny's face again. Surely some shred of realization, some high note from the screaming storm would penetrate and make him stir. He fended my blows weakly with his doubled arms, grinning foolishly without opening his eyes; my brother, this leering idiot who lay there with snow catching against his body in little curving piles.

I tried to lift him. He was thirty pounds heavier than I. When I had him raised to his knees, his head rolling loosely against my stomach, I slipped and fell across his body and felt the hard press of cold rocks against my face.

Le Fevre was beside me when I rose. Snow was plastered in his brows, two streaks of white in the lead-gray of his face. Somehow he'd got Fulgham on his feet, I saw.

"Try this. Make him strangle." Le Fefre was holding the bottle of whiskey toward me.

The whiskey did it. Danny swallowed a little and then he choked. He rolled on his stomach and coughed and gasped his way into unconsciousness. We got him up.

"Can you tell where to turn?" Le Fevre asked.

I said, "Sure." The storm bent the lie downwind and carried it away as soon as it was uttered. "Can you steer Fulgham?" I asked.

Like Danny, Fulgham needed more than steering. He was swaying, one foot braced uphill, his coarse-skinned face dark with cold, his mouth opening and closing idiotically as he tried to breathe directly into the wind.

"I'll bring him along," Le Fevre said.

We were off the trail as soon as we left slide rock, but the bench was only forty or fifty feet wide and I thought surely I could tell when we got too far down hill or bumped against the steep pitch on our right. Danny stumbled along with his chin hanging, letting me drag him where I would. The cold made fiery knots of lungs. The wind snatched the air we gasped and beat into our eyes until the never-ending whiteness rocketing at us was streaked with red.

We held close together and staggered on. When Le Fevre groaned a plea for rest we would stop and huddle, no one speaking until I asked Le Fevre if he was ready to move again. His eyes were holes in a gray skull, but he kept Fulgham on his feet and followed me until I halted of my own accord, not knowing whether we had gone too far or not far enough.

"Where are we?" Le Fevre asked.

"We've overshot a little," I said.

"Storming," Danny muttered. He was leaning heavily on me, every cold-stiff muscle in his face showing how sick he was.

THE Queen was very close, and that fact added to the fear rushing in my blood. In quiet weather at the mine we could hear packtrains coming a mile away, but now Le Fevre and I were shouting to make ourselves heard within a few feet of each other. If we could get up the mountain to the level of the mine, spread out, and work along the side of that last steep pitch. . . . I knew that in this fog of streaming ice there could be no spreading out to search, not even if Danny and Fulgham could walk alone. There was a cliff almost a hundred feet high not far below the portal.

"Cold," Danny said. He tried to brush the storm away with a loose, vague motion of his hand.

Awareness was coming to Fulgham too. You could see that he was cold and sick inside and that his brain was fumbling with cause and effect. He looked at me belligerently and said, "You took our bottle. You stole our bottle, you dirty sorehead."

The wind was on our left when I led the others in a turn. Our knees and a fearful, sudden drain of energy told us when we had left the bench completely.

Something whipped across my forehead. I pawed it away and it came back to flutter wildly against my lips. When I caught it clumsily in my free hand and saw the red figures 36 standing close to my thumb I knew it was one of the two new fifty-foot tapes I had sent up with the jack-whacker on his last trip.

We turned again, going into the wind to where the tape was knotted to another tape, and on to where a long drill stood wedged into the rocks, to where Ernst Hotzendorf was waiting, three hundred feet below the High Queen dump. There was snow in his short golden beard and blue fire in his little eyes when he saw us staggering toward him. He shouted and leaped to feel the tape where it was tied to the drill.

"The other end broke loose!" he yelled at us.

I knew then—he had tied the tapes across the trail to tell us when to turn. The far end had broken loose. By fourteen feet and my error of turning too soon we had made it in a blizzard so thick that Hotzendorf standing by his drill had not known his tapes were loose.

Le Fevre's stiff lips tried to smile. He said, "Hello, Hotsy, you old—" and collapsed.

Hotzendorf carried him the rest of the way. Ernst Hotzendorf was smaller than I but he could lift a twelve-pound sledge by grasping the extreme end of the handle in his fist and using wrist power alone. He was a careful, level-headed man too. To guide us to the dump he had strung fuse on drill steel, three rolls of it. He had warmed it and kept it ready to unroll in the cabin when the first threat of storm appeared.

Hotzendorf was a good man to have around. It was hard to believe that he didn't know about that woman. I looked at Danny, staggering along by himself now, and thought that it was a very good thing that Hotzendorf didn't know, or at least pretended not to.

The storm cleared in four days. The sun came out, smashing against the snow, splintering in our eyes when we stood and looked too long at the shining crests of the range or the brown valley far below where no snow had fallen yet.

We were here. Everything would be all right now.

The Queen was a silver proposition, and had it been only two miles high, a hundred thousand dollars would have been spent on it already. This winter, to convince stockholders that fifty thousand for a cable tram to reach a road four thousand feet below would be a sound investment, we were going to block out ore, to pile rich ore on the dump. When the air was bright with summer a few of the chief stockholders could ride burros to the mine—and be convinced.

Everything we had at the High Queen had been carried up or dragged up by burros that never had enough to eat.

The cabin and its furnishings were better than most at little mines: six single bunks with springs and mattresses; a huge range for cooking and heat; a plank floor and a canvas ceiling. We had other luxuries, such as twenty cases of canned fruit piled under the lower bunks, along with dynamite and blacksmith's coal and other stores. For water we had a spring in summer and snow in winter.

The blacksmith's shop was set into the mountain near the portal, the track running close to it across a narrow ribbon of dump that spilled steeply to a ledge which marked the top of an eighty or ninety-foot cliff. The track curved out after it passed the shop, running to a gentler slope where we had built a dump to give working room for timber and a space to pile ore.

CHAPTER 2

DANNY and Fulgham were sheepish and wobbly their first day in the mine, but we all settled down to what promised to be a pretty good winter's work. I put Danny and Fulgham at the tunnel heading to drive on with exploratory work. In there they could pound steel, talk about women and keep themselves busy. Le Fevre, after

he was able to go to work, started a raise three hundred feet in; and Hotzendorf, who didn't know about Eudora, started another raise a hundred feet ahead of Le Fevre.

They would both go up seventy-five feet, following a well-defined vein. Then they would run narrow drifts toward each other, saving all ore displaced in both raising and drifting. When their headings met they would have completed a rectangle seventy-five by one hundred feet, presumably exposing ore all the way. Then they would move ahead and do another block.

In my mind everything was organized for winter, with even the human components falling into a sensible pattern. I would do a good job in spite of the fact that I had decided secretly not to hold Joe Raleigh, the promoter and general manager, to his promise to let me build the tram and take over management of the mine afterward.

In the meantime, since I was the boss at three dollars a day, all I had to do was direct and check the work, dress steel, do the cooking, and frame timbers. That last was not a pleasant job, standing in the flowing snow on the dump, trying to see a blue chalkline mark on frozen logs. We timbered only when the mine was caving in about our ears.

When the wind began to hurl snow dust in earnest there were weeks when we never left the cabin doorway without first grasping the wire that ran to the portal. It was strung on posts and ran on the outside of the track seven feet above the ground. I was proud of that safety device, as though there never had been another like it in the world. Once on the track you could get to the portal on a blinding day by feeling a rail with your foot, if the track didn't happen to be blown full of snow, but I *always* used the safety wire when crossing the narrow fill near the portal—and so did Hotzendorf.

One white-blinding afternoon careful Hotsy made a mistake. He left the wire to go to the blacksmith's shop and turned too soon by eight or ten feet. He was stumbling up the mountain, completely lost before he knew it, but he didn't throw himself to panic. He kicked frozen rocks loose and hurled them until he heard above the storm the faint sound of one striking the tin roof of the shop. Four or five stones crashed above me while I was sharpening picks, and then Hotzendorf came through the doorway laughing.

"By golly!" he said. "I had my way lost for a minute."

I ran a spur from the main line immediately. While stringing the wire I wondered just what kind of act Eudora would have staged if Hotzendorf *had* grown panic-stricken and had gone the wrong way in the storm.

But he was a careful man. He used his head. After we went into the mine I stood for several minutes wondering just how much he knew about Eudora—and other men. Hotzendorf was nobody's fool, but even smart men have blind spots.

If the work had been unusually difficult or not been going well perhaps I would not have had time to stand there wondering, but everything inside the Queen was running smoothly. We were breaking ground and making ore. The writing in my time-book proved that, still does. I have that book yet and whenever I read it slowly I can hear the wind thundering over the cabin the way it did those nights when I was writing, when digging clothes hung drying behind the stove, when the wash-boiler full of melting snow was thumping on the hot lids—those nights when I looked up suddenly to see an odd expression in someone's eyes as he looked at me, or at one of the others.

My book wasn't the kind you carry in the hip pocket. It was the dues ledger of the Mystic Knights of the Secret Altar, a lodge which had lasted for three months in Camp Washington before the brethren discovered that the ritual didn't fit their more strenuous way of living. There was plenty of room to write in the ledger, and in case the Mystic Knights ever gathered before the Secret Altar again, which I considered extremely doubtful, I had not torn out the first three pages that listed dues paid.

> December 12—Heading 729. Gangue matter softening, streak widening. Saving ore from tunnel as well as raises.

Danny and Fulgham were breaking ground steadily, saving their ore clean. If their constant talk of women, and Fulgham's senseless, bull-like laugh sawed vilely on my nerves, I passed it off by telling myself that they were young.

December 26—Potatoes froze. Worst wind I ever saw. Le Fevre remembered that yesterday was Christmas. Ore good in all headings.

We had left our two sacks of potatoes too close to the west wall, and no one woke up in the night to replenish the fire.

January 13—Le Fevre back at work. Heading 791.

Le Fevre had been off for five days with a pain in his side that nearly doubled him, but he had done the cooking while I went inside to keep his heading going. Both he and Hotzendorf had gone up seventy-five feet above the tunnel and had started drifting toward each other. Hotzendorf had not broken a foot more ground than Le Fevre up till then.

January 20—Ore widening in tunnel breast. Danny and Fulgham had argument.

It was over a twenty-five cent chip in a poker game. Danny broke Fulgham's nose, and Fulgham laid Danny's cheekbone open. While Hotzendorf was wrestling Fulgham to the floor, I was knocking Danny out, but I doubted that I could ever do it again. The next day at dinner Danny and Fulgham were laughing about the fight, laughing about how they had competed against each other that morning to determine who could swing a doublejack the greatest number of strokes while drilling uppers.

It should have been good to hear, but I had seen just such horseplay flare to deadliness.

We would have, I realized, a large enough pile of ore on the dump for even stockholders to gloat over if things kept going as well as they were—and if the damned wind didn't blow the pile off the mountain.

February 3—Le Fevre sick again. I think Danny made a mistake about seeing high-grade wire silver.

The second sentence had nothing to do with silver, although Danny said he had seen a piece of wire silver and had thrown it in the car with other ore. The sentence meant that I was beginning to think that Hotzendorf did know about Danny and Eudora. I had seen him watching Danny and me oddly at times.

HOTZENDORF didn't play cards, but sometimes when the rest of us were playing he lay on his bunk, his face in shadows, and I was sure that he was watching Danny and me, knowing of course that if he tried to do anything to Danny he would have me to contend with also.

I think the wind was getting on his nerves. Still, he seemed the most cheerful one of us.

February 5—Le Fevre really sick. Heading 834. Wind fearful. Argument with Fulgham.

Le Fevre couldn't keep anything on his stomach. He had terrible pains across the small of his back. We had no medicine of any kind. We gave him soda and strong tea and water with snow in it, but he could keep nothing down. We rubbed his back and put hot cloths on it but nothing helped.

Before Danny and Fulgham went to work that morning—I had already looked at the results of shots while they were cleaning up the breakfast mess—I went outside to have another look at the weather, with an idea of making a try to get Le Fevre down. The weather was there. It made wires of the hair in my nostrils as soon as the door was closed behind me.

The sound of the wind, something that we had to endure only mentally when protected by logs and mortar, was moaning fury. It broke against the cabin and rushed under the eaves with a sobbing sound. There were rents in the blowing snow when I could see a short distance, and then the rents would close and there was only snow and wind. I could see the stiff anchor cables where they were clipped around steel plates bolted to the side logs of the cabin, but where the cables went through the eyes of steel rods set in drill holes in the rocks fifteen feet away—I could not see.

Until we were below timberline we would have to face conditions as they were outside the cabin door.

I went inside and said, "We can't make it."

Hotzendorf shook his head quickly, and his eyes flicked from me to Le Fevre lying in the bunk nearest the stove.

"You didn't think we could when you went out there, did you?" Fulgham had a short, curly black beard now. His lips twisted scornfully in it.

I didn't answer. I looked at Hotzendorf, but Fulgham would not let his challenge lay.

"What did you think you were going to do when you went out—change the weather?" he asked.

Hotzendorf's eyes didn't leave mine. "Maybe over the north way?"

The north route down the peak, aside from two series of ledges that would be iced, was the easiest descent, but when we reached the bottom, if we did, we would be in deep snow on Horn Bow Creek forty miles from the nearest camp. We had only six miles to go on the south side, six miles and seven thousand vertical feet, where the trail would be somewhere under a white slope, except for wind-swept ribs.

"Don't even talk about it!" Le Fevre said.

Danny looked at me over a cigarette he was rolling. "If you say, we can try."

I asked Hotzendorf, "What do you think?" I knew what he thought. I knew what any man in his right mind had to think—we couldn't get off the mountain.

"We can try, by golly," Hotzendorf said.

We all listened to wind rattling sheet roofing that was nailed, that was weighted with a ton of flat rocks. We heard the dry whisper of ice scratching at the window.

Le Fevre pushed himself over on his left side and dragged his head to where his hands clutched the sideboard of the bunk.

"Don't be fools," he said. "I've had it worse than this before."

"If the big cheese hadn't been so Carrie Nation with our bottle we could have straightened Le Fevre out with a few hot drinks," Fulgham said.

"No!" Le Fevre tried to laugh. "It wouldn't have helped."

"Sure it would!" Fulgham said, looking at me. "You took that whiskey away when I couldn't help myself, didn't you? You called me—" He mentioned several of the names I had called him when I was rapping his shins on the ledge.

"I wish," I said, "that I had smashed it across your mouth."

Fulgham took a bottle of vinegar from the table and held it toward me. "Try it with this one," he said.

I took the bottle and set it on the table again. He picked it up and held it toward me once more.

"Try that bottle-smashing now, you runty bastard!".

He had, I think, more brute strength than Danny, and tried to use it like a brute after I punched him in the mouth. I took advantage of the table and hit him hard in the side of the neck as he went by. He plunged the length of Le Fevre's bunk before he could check his rush. He came back more carefully. He wasn't fast like Danny but he was shrewd. When I tried to smear his broken nose he ducked and I caught him flush on the hairline. That broke two bones in my left hand.

I slipped along the end of the table and took advantage of another corner. A quart jar of sugar came in handy then. I smashed it deliberately on the same spot where I had numbed my hand. The blow didn't knock him out but it put him in the woodbox with a dazed expression.

He would have risen to fight some more but Hotzendorf stood over him with the iron we heated to unseal tin cans. Hotzendorf shook the iron the way a parent shakes a finger.

"I have lost patience with this fighting!" he said.

February 7—Jacob Le Fevre, about 55, died at four o'clock this morning from stomach trouble.

WE DRESSED him. It seemed indecent to carry him into the cold otherwise. We wrapped him in his blankets and laid him at the leeward end of the shop where the logs had diverted the wind to leave a little crescent of bare rock. Cold-soaked, we stood there for a few moments. I thought of all the times Le Fevre's quiet voice had turned an angry situation. At best it would have taken two days to carry him down; he had died two days after we knew he should go down—but still, I hadn't tried.

The wind veered suddenly. A rush of snow slanting down the mountain quartered against the shop, blinding us in its swirl. When it cleared I saw Fulgham staring at me with hate in his eyes. He'd put his Scotch cap on his long black hair before coming out, but nothing over his heavy woolen undershirt.

"I still say a little of that whiskey you threw away might have saved him," Fulgham said.

"I've heard enough about that whiskey." My left hand felt frozen. I wasn't going to use the other one either. I was going to kick him in the groin when he moved in.

He started.

Danny shouldered him back. "No, you don't!" Danny said. "Not when his hand is busted."

"That's his hard luck." Fulgham tried to push Danny aside.

They would have been fighting in an instant, but Hotzendorf lunged between them, shouting fiercely, "By golly! By golly! And Jake just dead!"

We went inside the cabin where I told Fulgham, "We're going to get along if I have to use a drill on you."

He looked from one of us to the other and laughed his coarse, booming laugh that wrenched at sanity. "The three of you, huh?"

February 10—Fulgham cutting timber station at 257. Hotzendorf starting new raise at 500. Ore holding strong in tunnel.

Raleigh would beef about the timber station. We really didn't need it this late in the winter, but the new assignments put Hotzendorf between Fulgham and Danny. Since the morning beside Le Fevre's body, probably since their fight over the twenty-five cent chip, Fulgham and my brother hated each other—and they were just a little afraid of each other, which made it worse. Of course the change put Hotzendorf closer to Danny, which was another source of worry because I was certain now that Hotzendorf knew about Danny and Eudora.

Sometimes I lay awake at night and thought about all the trouble and worry that woman was causing.

Danny didn't worry. He slept like a swine. One night when I was awake Hotzendorf got quietly from his bunk and went to get a drink, stopping just a moment by Danny's bed on his return. A little longer and I would have been on the floor and moving in with the short drill I kept at the head of my bunk, but Hotzendorf walked on softly and went back to bed, and I lay in a cold sweat clutching the piece of steel.

Fulgham might have been awake too. He was a light sleeper, always rising on his elbow to watch me when I wasn't resting well and got up to put more wood in the stove.

Fulgham also slept with a short drill behind his pillow now.

Our days were full of working with our hands, of conquering physical obstacles, and we were all right then, even speaking normally to each other in the shop and in the mine. The strain began each night after the tinware from the evening meal was washed and put away, when the wash boiler was heaped with melting snow, when we had two hours with nothing to do but sit and listen to the roaring wind—and wonder what lay in each other's minds.

Le Fevre had sent a sack of books on the last pack-train that brought our other personal gear and last-minute supplies. Fulgham could barely read. Danny never had cared about reading. Hotzendorf took no interest in the printed word, and I found that I couldn't concentrate on a page because of wondering where the other eyes in the room were looking.

There was an evil coil of tension pulsing in that cabin, a watchful, waiting coil that went on breathing after we had gone to bed.

I was beginning to hate Danny for the secret way he smiled sometimes when he sat smoking his pipe with his feet on the oven door. He was thinking of that woman, I was sure, that Eudora with her maddening walk, her coppery curls, her innocent gray eyes that gathered a false look of injury so easily. I couldn't trust Hotzendorf because it was too much to believe that he did not know about her, that he wasn't trying to fool Danny and me.

And I detested Fulgham. He was a brute fresh from the slime with some of the slime still on him.

He ate noisily, punching food into that curling black beard. I could not make him stop his habit of licking his knife before taking butter from the common dish. And one day, I had had enough.

I knocked over my coffee when I rose. I stood and cursed him violently. He sneered and said, "Delicate, huh?"

I got my drill from my bunk and laid it by my plate. "I'm going to brain you, Fulgham, if you don't act like a human being when we're eating."

HE GOT his piece of steel and challenged me with his guffaw. Hotzendorf grabbed the unsealing iron, and Danny took a heavy piece of yellow pitchwood. There

was murder leering on the ridgelog. I know now how utterly we had relapsed to savagery, for there were knives and other cutting tools in the room—but we took clubs by instinct.

Fulgham backed toward the stove, his eyes as unwavering and unafraid as the eyes of a timber wolf in a steel trap.

Hotzendorf's eyes held no more sanity than Danny's, and I know mine must have been the same. In a moment after the first quick move was made we would have beaten Fulgham to death, but Hotzendorf suddenly dropped his iron and cried, "Everybody is crazy!" He grabbed my arm. He shook his fist at Fulgham and Danny. "Stop! Stop, by golly!"

We put our weapons down. In a curiously detached manner that didn't frighten me then I thought, "I should have killed him without giving the others a chance to help." Perversely, I hated them for wanting to join me.

For a long time Hotzendorf sat on his bunk, shaking his head and muttering, "Crazy—crazy!"

February 15—Tunnel breast solid ore. Very rich ore in Hotzendorf's raise at 500.

The tighter our suspicion and tension wound within us the more, it seemed, the Queen expanded toward becoming the mine that afterwards produced three million dollars of dividends to stockholders.

February 21—Ore holding strong in tunnel heading. Fulgham broke into what must be split in vein and struck rich ore at timber station. Will explore it a little.

That last was an accident of course, but the chief stockholders never accepted it as such; they said I was a smart mining man to have discovered that split in the vein.

We never talked mining in the cabin at nights. Put two miners together on a desert island and the air would be foul with powder smoke, but we who were uncovering a rich producer sat a hundred feet from the portal and watched each other and talked about little at all.

February 27—Can't depend on H. to stop any more trouble.

Hotzendorf was growing quarrelsome over trivial matters—how close to the table to put the bench that he and Fulgham sat on, who it was who hadn't washed a plate clean, whose turn it was to fill the wash boiler with snow. He and Danny almost came to blows over that last duty one night. I supported Hotzendorf because it was not his turn. He didn't thank me for my intervention, and Danny wouldn't speak to either Hotzendorf or me after the quarrel.

The wind had changed, coming from the north now, colder and stronger than ever. We couldn't get off the mountain and we knew it.

March 2—Wire silver in the tunnel breast.

After exposing that when picking down, Danny came out to the shop to tell me. We went to the heading and talked normally for the first time since the wash boiler quarrel.

"Too bad you didn't take part of your wages in stock," Danny said. "But you'll have a good thing anyway."

I didn't tell him that I *had* assigned half my wages for a year to be taken out in stock. Raleigh had already made the transaction—nor did I tell my brother that I had decided to turn down the offer to build the tram and later take over management of the Queen.

The mine was the least of my worries at the moment. Danny was friendly now, and it was high time to get rid of some of my thoughts.

"Danny," I said, "you and Hotzendorf's wife—"

"I wondered when that was coming." He grinned. "Don't worry. I was just a lad out of my weight class. I didn't get to first base."

One thing I knew about Danny was whether he was telling the truth or not. He was. I stared at him.

He began to clean his pipe with a pocket knife. "She gave Jay Cottrell a bad time too. She got him in bad with his wife, and all for nothing. That engineer Nyack—she's been leading him on and driving him wild—and laughing at him all the time."

I began to put samples into an ore sack. "Is that a fact?"

"She's no good, Craig. A man wouldn't want to get serious about her." He took the stem out of his pipe and blew through the bowl. "Suppose another man takes her away from Hotsy. In a week, in a month

how would he feel every time he had to leave her and go to work?"

"I don't know," I said.

He put his pipe together and began to fill it. "You ought to know. You figure on facing just that thing."

He was three years younger than I. He would always be infinitely older when it came to women.

He put his pipe in his mouth and looked at me steadily. "It's no good, Craig. Every time you look at Hotsy I can see in your eyes just how no-good you know it is. I don't know for sure how far you and her have gone—"

"Shut up!"

He reached for his candlestick hooked into a crack. He watched me while he tipped the flame against the brown tobacco in his pipe.

"It's none of your damn business, you understand!"

"That's right." He began to muck back to get drilling room.

"It's none of your business!" I said.

"Sure." He went on working.

"Well, then be quiet!"

He stood with the shovel in his hands, his face holding an expression of exasperation and patience exactly like our mother's look when she had come between our fights in years gone past. He stood quietly until I crossed the muck pile and went down the tunnel.

Every word he'd said was true, but he wasn't going to change anything.

CHAPTER 3

I WENT past Fulgham, who said something that I didn't hear, nor did I stop to find out what it was. He cursed and called after me, "Big shot mining man already, huh?"

Going from the portal to the shop I caught just a glimpse of something moving near the logs where Le Fevre lay, and then the snow came in whistling sheets from off the crest again. I followed the wire to the shop door and then went around the shop. One of Le Fevre's blankets had blown loose and was flapping. He was staring up with all the agony he had died in frozen on his face.

I wrapped the blanket around him again. Later, when I was sharpening steel I could see his face still, and hear him saying, *"You were afraid to try, weren't you?"* The wind keened over the roof but it did not tear those words away. I saw Le Fevre's frozen face, and then sometimes I saw Eudora's bright face.

"You'll take care of Hotsy, won't you. . . ."

I found myself hammering savagely on a cold bit.

The tram car came and went, passing close to the shop door. The window was in the end logs above Le Fevre's body, but I knew from the sound of the car when Fulgham had finishing mucking, when Hotzendorf took over, and later when Danny began to use the car. Fulgham always came out slowly across that high fill, but not as slowly as Hotzendorf, while Danny boomed from the tunnel as though there were summer outside instead of snow and ice that might derail the car.

After his second trip Danny came into the shop. He stood beside the anvil and smoked his pipe. I tempered steel and didn't look at him.

"You know that bad roll of fuse?" he asked.

"Yes." We had a roll of fuse that burned too fast, a "runner" we called it, fuse that could send flame streaking to a cap and primer in a loaded hole and kill a man before he had time to spit his round. I was saving it in case we ran short of fuse. In an emergency we could use it in long lengths, one shot at a time.

"Suppose," Danny said carefully, "Hotsy got some of that fuse by mistake up in his raise?"

After a few moments I said, "You crazy fool! Get out of here!"

He sat down on a powder box. His voice trembled when he said, "I didn't mean it. I had to know how bad it is with you."

"It's none of your business!" I said.

"I had to know." I saw fear in his eyes. "We've got to get out of here before something happens."

We listened to the wind trying to lift the roof. Even if the shop window had not been grimed with smoke, we could have caught sight of the portal only briefly when the blowing snow was not obscuring it entirely.

"No job is worth going through what

we do in the cabin," Danny said. "I'm not sleeping now. You can feel, you can smell murder in there. We've got to get out."

"I'm staying until the end of March," I said. "And I won't let you kill yourself by starting sooner."

He glanced at the shelf where the fuse was. The defective coil was wired to a nail below the shelf.

"I think Hotsy knows about you and his wife," Danny said.

I looked at temper running down in a bit—and looked at it until it ran blue and worthless.

"I'm afraid he overheard Fulgham and me talking one day in the mine," Danny said.

He hadn't tried to do anything about it. "To hell with him," I said. "Eudora and I are going to Arizona together as soon as spring comes."

Danny smiled. "Her and me were going to Nevada last fall, just as soon as I bought her a diamond."

I put the drill back into the fire, afraid of having it in my hand.

"I didn't buy it," Danny said. "What are you going to buy her, Craig?" When I stared at him without speaking he got off the box and stretched. "She's all right, maybe, for some things—but for a man to get serious about—"

Without thinking I tried to hit him with my left hand. He caught it on his forearm. He smothered my other hand and held me helpless across the anvil. I knew what I had suspected—that I never again could beat him in a fair fight, and I knew that he could cut between Eudora and me if he really tried. He held me until my anger broke and left me sick.

He said, "She's no good, Craig. She even made eyes at Fulgham before he lost his stake in a poker game."

He went out into the blast and I stood over the anvil looking at the back of my left hand. The skin was tight and black. Blood was running from a cut where I had raked the hand across the bent spikes that held the anvil to the block.

THE wind was howling fury the next morning when, following habit, I left the breakfast mess for the others to clean up and started into the mine to see what last night's shots had revealed. Going along the fill in front of the shop I held the wire and kicked my foot against a rail for guidance. And then something went wrong. Although I still had the wire I was getting farther from the rail than I should be. I went on a few more steps and then I couldn't find the rail with my foot. Another step and a great fear clamped me hard.

On hands and knees I examined the ground. I was within inches of the edge of the fill where it ran steeply down to the ledge that stood eighty or ninety feet above the bench. I followed the rails to the portal and there, more by feeling than seeing, I found that someone had driven a moil into a granite seam—and moved the wire four feet to the right.

One more step would have sent me plunging down the frozen slope to bounce from the ledge. I moved the wire back to its proper spike.

My first thought was to rush into the cabin and demand the truth from someone. From someone. . . . The three of them, as far as I knew, had come from the mine about the same time when I was cooking supper.

Maybe in the night. . . .

Hotzendorf was my first choice of course. But what if Danny had lied about Eudora? After me, Hotzendorf was always the first man to enter the mine each morning, and he always used the wire. The two of us could have gone rolling down that snow-slick incline, leaving Danny to console Eudora over the loss of a husband and a lover.

Fulgham hated me, I knew. He was a cunning brute. Suspicion coiled and tangled with suspicion in my mind. I would be crafty and say nothing and maybe find the truth from someone's eyes in the lamplight that night.

I found out nothing from my covert watching, except what I already knew—that Fulgham hated me, that Hotzendorf watched me from his little eyes, that Danny studied me closely. Craft would not serve my purpose.

"Someone moved the safety wire above the high place today—last night," I said, and tried to watch them all.

No one spoke.

"Someone tried to kill me by moving that wire!"

No one spoke.

Their eyes told me nothing. Their faces were unmoving in the yellow light.

"Speak up, damn you!" I said.

Fulgham laughed. "Le Fevre did it." He laughed again. "Le Fevre moves. Ask the Dutchman."

Hotzendorf leaped up, his eyes wild pools of anger. "You! You!" He shook his fist at Fulgham.

Fulgham's lips twisted in his beard. "Hotsy saw Le Fevre walking on the dump one night. Tell us about it, Dutchy."

Hotzendorf's anger faded. He smiled to himself. 'You will see for yourself some night, you smart Fulgham, you."

Fulgham looked at me. "See? Le Fevre moved your damned wire." He laughed. "He did it because you were afraid to get him off the mountain."

I sprang toward him. Danny moved in fast and shouldered me back. His face was strangely white.

"No more talk like that!" he said.

Fulgham laughed. "You're afraid of dead men too, huh, Danny?" He looked at me with hatred in his eyes. "It won't be a dead man that hurts you, Troxell, when the time comes."

Whether Fulgham had moved the wire or not he had cleverly broken the straight line of my questioning, so there was no chance to push the subject further. While undressing, Hotzendorf moved his lips silently and never took his eyes from Fulgham.

"Get yourself an eyeful, Dutchy," Fulgham said.

I did not sleep much that night.

Danny was sleeping with drill steel in his bed now. I saw him place it handily when he first got under the blankets.

March 6—Wind stopped last night at three o'clock.

The silence woke me. I grasped my steel instantly, associating the eerie change with human factors. Bed springs creaked across the room. My fingers tightened on the cold steel and I stared toward Hotzendorf's bunk, but no stealthy sound of other movement came.

It was several minutes before I realized the wind had stopped—the roaring was in my ears still, but the mountain was silent. A rafter creaked from cold. Someone cleared his throat. I got up quietly and dressed, and when I passed Fulgham's bunk he was on his elbow watching.

The cold outside was intense. It almost crackled. I blinked at stars we hadn't seen for weeks, at blue-white crests thrust hard into the sky. Far below I saw a tiny light that made me think of Eudora and wonder what she was doing. On the bench a light wind swept whispering snow in little puffs.

I went toward the shop to get the roll of fuse that had burned in my thoughts for hours before I went to sleep. Before entering I glanced around the corner at Le Fevre, perhaps to see that his blankets were still around him, perhaps because some tiny fragment of Hotzendorf's ghost talk had caught in the crevices of my mind.

Le Fevre was all right.

Just as I was poised to hurl the hard coil of fuse down the mountain I saw a figure coming from near the cabin. The fuse spun through the ice-crisp air and struck something that twanged, but I did not see it fall, for I was watching the man coming toward me. For just an instant my mind had leaped wildly with superstitious fear. Damn Hotzendorf for ever saying that Le Fevre moved!

Danny walked up. "That wind—" he said. "For a while I couldn't understand what had happened."

"You didn't have to come outside!"

"I couldn't sleep. In a couple of hours it will be time to get up anyway." His breath drifted upward past his face to give him a ghostly appearance. "We've got to get out of here. We can see our way down now."

"We'll stay the month out," I said. I needed every cent—besides, Raleigh wouldn't be back from the East until the middle of April to pay us off and buy my stock so that I could meet the price Eudora had set on our going away together.

Light was bright on Danny's cheekbones and chin but his eyes were blurred with shadows.

"You threw the fuse away?"

"Yes!" I said savagely, regretting even that much of an answer. My thoughts were none of his business.

"Hotzendorf has a brand-new candlestick lying on the logs beside his bunk," Danny said. "I saw him put it there last night. That guy is going batty, Craig."

He walked toward the cabin. He was building the fire when I entered. Hotzendorf was dressing. Fulgham was lying in his bunk, chewing the stub of a cigar he had saved for weeks. No one spoke.

The candlestick on the wall side of Hotzendorf's bunk had been filed until the point was needle-sharp.

WHEN he brought the first car of muck from his chute that morning Hotzendorf came to where I was framing timbers for Fulgham.

"That Fulgham—he watches me with his hair hanging over his forehead, with his eyes shining like a wild boar's." He leaned close to me, his lips red in the gold of his beard, his eyes secretive. "That Fulgham—he will see for himself some night when Le Fevre walks to the edge of the dump and looks into the valley where we couldn't take him."

His voice raised the hackles on the back of my neck.

He nodded at me several times, and then he rolled his car toward the tunnel, turning his head to watch Le Fevre's body as he passed.

Danny was right. We had better get down fast. About two days to catch up some of the worst places where we hadn't paused to timber—and then we would get off Colorow.

I stared at the adze in my hands. My left hand wasn't knitting very well. I could hold a tool in it, doing most of the work with my right hand, but when I wanted to release my grip I had to uncurl the fingers of my left hand by force. I did that now and went into the shop to get warm, but I didn't warm up very fast. It was more than cold that had chilled me on the dump. I didn't feel very well. For two days my left armpit had been swelling.

We would catch up some timbering and go down. We would be taking a bad chance to tackle the descent, but staying was not good.

Just before shooting time that evening Danny and Hotzendorf came into the cabin when I was trying to cook supper. Danny had three fuses in his hands. He laid them on the table without saying a word.

He cut about a foot from one, split the end, and finally said, "Look here."

He lit the fuse and flame gushed its length in seconds. It should have taken approximately one minute.

"Another bad roll?" I asked, but I knew that wasn't right, for the roll we were using currently was all right. They would not have had reason to break out a fresh one.

"The same bad one," Danny said.

"I threw it away!"

"I saw you," Danny said. "You threw away a good roll. It must have hit the safety wire. We found it in the snow at the edge of the high place." He indicated the burned fuse from which tar was still bubbling.

"I threw the bad one away!" I knew I had because it had been wired to a nail under the shelf where the good fuse was. The four of us knew why one roll was wired so that no one in a hurry would use it by mistake.

"My God! Fulgham—" I started toward the door. Fulgham was going to shoot two timber hitches that day.

"We told him," Danny said. "He'd already picked his hitches out anyway."

I stared at the fuse on the table, and I began to doubt my own sanity.

Hotzendorf was looking at me oddly.

"Anyone can make a mistake," I said. "But I'm sure I didn't."

They stood there watching me.

"I didn't try to blow you up!" I yelled.

Danny reached to put his hand on my shoulder. I knocked it away.

"I threw the bad fuse away!" I said.

"Hadn't we better get out of here tomorrow?" Danny asked.

Damn his gentle tone, his old look. He had suggested murder with that defective fuse in the first place; he had spied on me when I went out to throw it away because I couldn't bear the suggestion it offered every time I looked at it hanging on the wall; and now he was twisting my actions to make me appear demented.

"We'll go down when we catch the timbering up," I said.

Hotzendorf was still looking at me when Danny took his arm and said, "Come on, Hotsy. Let's do our shooting."

It was not the unnatural stillness that kept us awake that night. It was the poisonous, murder-laden atmosphere inside the cabin. Once when I got up to get my pipe

and tobacco off the table Fulgham whispered from his bunk, "Thought I was going to shoot hitches today, didn't you? I picked them out instead. Fooled you, didn't I?"

We were all awake at midnight.

Danny rose and put more fuel on the fire. When the glow from the slots in the firebox door began to recede I saw that the room was still dimly lighted by moonbeams coming through the one window. The wind whispered over the roof, but in my ears it was still roaring. I felt feverish and my armpit was so sore and swollen I had to hold my arm away from my body. There were no sounds of heavy breathing in the room. Let them stay awake. I would be awake also, with my drill steel ready in my right hand. Let the men who had moved the wire try to sneak up on me in the night.

Time after time my fingers began to relax around the drill. Once I roused suddenly and realized that I had been dozing in spite of the pain in my left arm. I clutched my drill and waited. Fulgham went to sleep. I heard the measured exhaust of his breath against his blankets.

Hotzendorf began to snore gently.

Danny was still awake, I knew—but Danny—he was my brother. My fingers relaxed against the drill.

At first I thought Fulgham's breathing had grown unusually loud, and then I came fully awake and heard a throaty whisper.

"You? You and Eudora! You thought I didn't know!"

Hotzendorf was over me. He was pointing at me with that candlestick, his hand almost touching his face.

"I know about you!" he whispered.

I SWUNG the drill. For a moment I thought I had hit him, but I hadn't. I hit the bunk above me instead and the force of the blow tore the steel from my hand. Hotzendorf grunted. From across the room Danny had caught him in the back with his drill. That gave me time to grab Hotzendorf's wrist. Caving rock would have been easier to hold. He jerked away from me. The hook of the candlestick dug along my wrist bone and disjointed my thumb. He jarred against the table and then, grunting horribly, he came driving back with the candlestick held close to his face.

I caught him in the stomach with my feet and smashed him back against the table. Danny reached over and grabbed his shoulders then.

But Danny couldn't hold him.

"I'll kill them all!" Hotzendorf screamed. It wasn't "you"—it was "them." I knew his mind was gone completely.

Fulgham was out of his bunk with his long hair hanging wildly. He grabbed Hotzendorf when the little German tore away from Danny. But Fulgham couldn't hold him. Hotzendorf bellowed. There were curses and grunts and the sounds of blows. The table went down.

That cleared the struggling bodies so that I could get up from my bunk. My drill was gone, fallen between the bunk and wall. Three men were on the floor, and when one got up I butted him with my head. It was Fulgham. He hurled me back against the bunk and I went sick from the pain of my left arm.

He was grinding his teeth as he choked me. Then Danny tore him loose. I sagged against the bunk and watched them fight.

The door was open, then, and Hotzendorf was gone.

Danny finally threw Fulgham into the wreckage of the table and held him there and made him understand the cause of all the violence.

"Holy hell!" Fulgham said when he was on his feet. "Let's get him. He's crazy!"

We were all a little crazy now that the magmas of our brooding had erupted and our lust for violence had been stirred to frenzy.

"Let him go," I said. I could barely use either left or right hand when I started to dress.

Fulgham lit a candle and set it on the stove. The right side of his underwear from the shoulder to his waist was wet with blood. Hotzendorf had stabbed him in the shoulder. Danny's chest was bloody too. The candlestick we found on the floor had been torn from Hotzendorf's hand when the hook twisted in Danny's undershirt, twisted in the heavy muscle beneath his right shoulder.

"The hell with letting him go!" Fulgham said.

"He'll get dynamite in the shop," Dan-

ny said. There wasn't much there, just a few mashed sticks that we'd carried in our pockets after loading holes.

But Hotzendorf was crazy. And he knew dynamite.

The night was as clear and quiet as the one when the wind had stopped. A shard of moon was shining on the mountain. There were our tracks in the powdery snow leading to the tunnel. There were the dark logs of the shop and the ominous black portal.

We could hear or see nothing of Hotzendorf.

We looked behind the cabin and behind the shop. Le Fevre was lying there in the dark shadows.

The hook that held the shop door was still in place.

"He's in the mine," Fulgham said.

"He must be," Danny said.

"No!" I said. "Why would he go in there?"

"He did. He's crazy," Fulgham said.

Danny took a broadaxe from the shop and Fulgham took an adze, a razor-keen, hoe-like tool with a spike in the end opposite the blade. They took their candlesticks from the lagging just inside the portal.

"He went inside all right," Danny said slowly.

They went into the bore. Their steps pounded hollowly for a while and then there was silence.

I took another look behind the cabin and shop, and watched the slope above, and peered at sweeping sculpture of snow on the bench below. I was standing on the bare crescent of rock by Le Fevre's body when I saw Hotzendorf.

He came from behind the pile of ore on the dump. He must have been watching us. But maybe he hadn't. I stayed where I was in the shadows, thinking bitterly that for weeks I had slept with a piece of steel that had failed me when I needed it—and now I doubted that I could have held it in my right hand if I had it.

He was barefooted. He padded like an animal across the dump and then the angle of the shop corner cut him from view. The cold, the pain was bringing sanity back to me. I thought. *He's headed for the cabin. We can trap him in there and maybe get him without killing him.*

BUT HE wasn't headed for the cabin. I heard the soft whine of snow beneath his bare feet. He was coming toward the shop. I crouched, my right hand resting on a cold rock. And then I realized that it was not a rock. One of the blankets around Le Fevre had come loose again and I had my hand on his face. Light wind curling around the shop corner was blowing his hair against my wrist.

The whispering footsteps stopped. Then they came on again.

I saw a candlestick clutched close to his face as he came around the corner. He turned his face toward the shadows and stood there with moonlight shining on the edges of his beard.

"I see him there! I see him!" The words were childish, the voice insane, and the message death. "I found the bad fuse in the snow!" he said. "I changed it to kill them all!" He laughed. "I changed the wire too!"

He came toward me.

I used both hands and never felt the pain. I hoisted Le Fevre's thin, stiff corpse erect and flung it straight at Hotzendorf. I intended it only as a diversion to let me get around him.

The candlestick rose and fell. Hotzendorf screamed in terror. He grabbed Le Fevre's body and wrestled with it. I couldn't move then although I had started. The blankets spilled from the corpse. Hotzendorf had his left hand twisted in Le Fevre's jumper. He screamed and struck and dragged the body across the track with him. For a moment it seemed that the rigid frame was actually walking, actually driving Hotzendorf before it.

Hotzendorf was still stabbing when they went over the edge of the high place. The night sent back his savage cries while they were rolling down the steep incline. I ran to the edge and saw the dead man and Hotzendorf bounce from the ledge below, one stiff, unyielding, the other threshing. Then there was silence.

When my stomach had nothing more to lose I staggered into the shop and got a singlejack to hammer on the rails as a signal to the others.

We started down the next morning, just a few hours later, carrying all the blankets and canvas we could handle. I don't re-

member much about the trip. I know I tried to argue about not using the ledge route, no longer afraid to show my fear to anyone.

Fulgham laughed and said, "Hell, if we fall, it's all snow down there, ain't it?"

We huddled under canvas and blankets somewhere below timberline that night. My left arm was no longer hurting. I didn't even have a left arm. Where drifts were a hundred feet deep we laid blankets on the snow and crawled on them, picking up the one behind to throw it on ahead. When the snow was only stomach-deep Fulgham was breaking trail and talking about whiskey and Danny was towing me with a rope around my waist.

There was one other lucid interval when I lay on someone's bed in a very hot room and saw Doc McGuire's red beard and bearskin coat, and heard him say cheerfully, "Best case of blood poison I ever saw. We may have to cut his head off to save him."

They didn't take the arm off at the hospital in Valley City. I raved and fought against it, Danny told me. It was he who made the decision to let me live or die unmaimed.

When my arm was no longer a tortured thing of long incisions to the bone and drains and sheeting, when I could look from the window with mild interest at horses reaching through the fence for green grass at the livery stable across the street, Danny came on one of his regular visits with cigars and beer and a copy of the *Mining Herald*.

"You going to lay there all summer?" he demanded. "You got to build a tram, it says in this here paper."

"To hell with the tram."

I didn't want to be anywhere near where Eudora was. She had been five or six times to see me in the hospital, saying that she loved me, that we'd better not go away to Arizona after all, now that I was going to get a fine salary for running the High Queen, now that Queen stock had bounced from ten cents a share to sixteen dollars and fifty cents at the Valley City exchange.

The arm had drained more than blood poison from my system. For the first time I had read in Eudora's eyes the things that Danny had told me truthfully. But still, I didn't know how to make a clean break.

Danny lit a cigar and watched a nurse pass in the hall.

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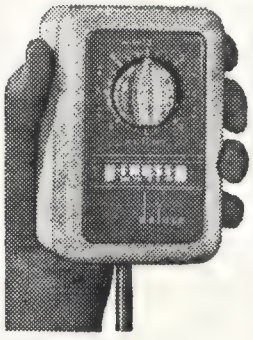

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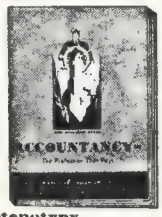

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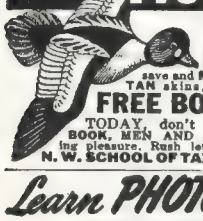

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"Too thin," he said.

Then he studied my face and scowled. "Still thinking about that fly-up-the-creek, huh?"

"Not the way you think I am," I told him.

"Just the way I think you are, you soft-headed sucker! You think she's got a lease and bond contract with you, don't you? If you'd met her over at the Pines you wouldn't hesitate to tell her to go to hell, would you?"

"No, but—"

"She's not as good as a girl from the Pines. They'll roll you for your money. She'll roll you for your honor, such as Troxell honor is, and laugh at you afterwards."

He was right and he could talk, but he hadn't loved a woman to the point of considering murder to get her. He was smart and he was right, but still I couldn't just snap my fingers and say, "That's all, Eudora."

"You can't do it, huh?" He laughed. "Well, you won't have to. Her and Fulgham packed and left for Montana two days ago."

I stared.

He rolled his cigar and grinned. "Fulgram made a killing at faro-bank, about ten thousand bucks. She gave him her old come-on and when she tried to back out she found she'd picked the wrong man for that little game. It worked on gentlemen like you, but Fulgham—" he laughed. "That guy's a brute all the way down the line. He kicked hell out of her and took her to Montana. He'll make a Christian of her—if he doesn't kill her first."

He was welcome to either job.

After a while Danny said, "The engineers have finished their check survey on the tram. There's going to be nine towers. I figure I ought to be the main foreman on the tower work. You can write in your books and point up the mountain and say, 'There's my little brother on that high ledge. He's a real man!' "

He rolled his cigar and stared at the ceiling. "You can do that all right, seeing as how you're scared to death of high places."

I swung my feet out of bed. I was pretty dizzy yet and my left arm was no good, but I would be all right in a few weeks.

"Who's afraid of high places?" I said.

ASK ADVENTURE

Information You Can't Get Elsewhere

A RESIDENCE in Guatemala.

We are planning on going to Guatemala to live, and would like what information we can get in reference to living conditions, climate, money exchange, local language, what commercial crops are raised, and what wild fruit and berries grow there. Also what kind of timber, game animals and fish, and what about snakes, bugs, mosquitoes etc.? How about business opportunities?

Fred H. Friedrick
Slana, Alaska

Reply by Edgar Young—The money system of Guatemala is based on a more or less imaginary gold unit, the *quetzal*, which is worth $1.60 in U.S. money. This unit is for trade purposes and is actually backed up by gold bullion and coin, and while U.S. money can be traded for the actual gold coins, the local money, bills and coins called *billete* can't be changed into *quetzals*. Chile has a similar system and it's okay. In Guatemala are branch U.S. banks, too, and New York drafts can be bought with either native or our money.

Years ago when I was circulating in Guatemala, when gun-slicking for Lee Christmas (I was his bodyguard), the rate of exchange was twenty billete (bin-yay-tee) for one U.S. dollar and for these twenty pesos you could eat supper, have wine or beer, have breakfast, and then

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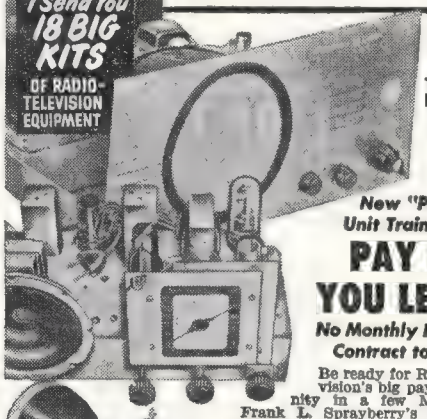

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leave with some nickels and dimes. I haven't seen a rate of exchange list recently and don't know just what it is—anyhow it is in our favor heavily.

Spanish is the local lingo. The people are lovely, for they are a mixture descended from Spanish and a very high type of Indian ancestor, the Mayas. They are smallish and some of the women are quite pretty. Beans and corn-meal are the two staples of diet just as they are in Mexico. The country slopes up from two oceans on either side until in the middle it is a considerable distance above sea-level—not quite so high as Mexico, but high enough to afford spring-like climate at all times. The western half, to my notion, is the best so far as climate is concerned.

In the swamps on the eastern side along the Atlantic, bananas are raised on vast plantations owned by big U.S. and native interests. On the western side, about half-way up are to be found small coffee farms, called *fincas*, where some of the finest coffee in the world is raised. This coffee is mainly used for blending here in the States and Europe. For some peculiar reason the natives ruin this coffee for their own use by reducing it to a syrup, keeping it in a jug, and then making it into coffee by pouring it into boiling water in your cup. The best coffee in the world grows there but you can't get a decent cup of coffee in the whole country unless you find some deluded Yankee making it our way.

There are plenty of mosquitoes in the lowlands on both sides but these thin out as altitude is attained so that in the highlands they are scarce. I slept on the ground for months without ever seeing a snake, but there are some there; and the worst experience I had was to have an armadillo run over my face.

You can raise anything that will grow at any place on the globe in the small Republic of Guatemala just by picking the proper altitude, and there is no richer soil anywhere than this volcanic ash mixed with humus.

You can save me a lot of typing if you send a nickel (coin) to Pan American Union, Washington, D.C. and ask them to forward their booklet, *"Guatemala,"* which contains all the general dope on the country.

You can drive right into Guatemala from where you are if you are near the Alaskan Highway.

FROM Korea to a career in forestry.

I would like to have what you offer concerning entry into the Forestry Service and all the requirements and data.

I am a veteran from the last war and just returned from Korea where I served in the U.N. Raiders. I'm married and have a family and 26 years old. I would like to

get into the Forestry Service in any part of the U.S. so would you consider my request for information.

James L. Wilkins
Honey Grove, Texas

Reply by Arthur H. Carhart—I am arranging for a booklet, "Careers in Forestry" to be sent to you which gives full information on the requirements for anyone to get a permanent job in the U.S. Forest Service, and other closely allied outdoor agencies.

There just isn't much use to try for most of these without having the technical training required. If you have it, fine. But if not you have no great chance of landing a permanent job.

I'd suggest that you immediately prospect the chances of getting G.I. training in this profession. One of the fellows I had on my wildlife crew did that after World War I and now is a ranger in Utah. I know of others who have done this. It means that you have to go through some fairly hard sledding while the schooling and the training periods are on, but you have a 1000% better chance of getting in any of the agencies in outdoor work if you do that.

On top of that, if you do qualify by training, the Civil Service gives you a break in the extra points allowed veterans. If by any chance, you got nicked by a bullet, but still are physically qualified, you get extra points in some cases. So if you have the training you are in a preferred position, and if you can get G.I. training, that is a help at the start.

If the V.A. figures that you are eligible for the G.I. training, you'll find the list of the forestry schools in the booklet.

VOLTAGE stabilizers—and how you might do without.

I have a Philco Sway portable and just recently have burned out the voltage control and am having difficulty getting it repaired.

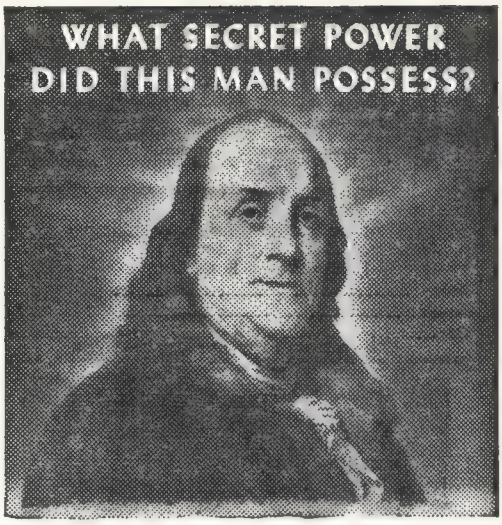
The radio repairman tells me that the voltage variation is too great for the control to operate under such wide variation. He tells me surges up to 150 volts occur.

I wondered if it is possible to hook up lamps or resistances in some sort of divided circuits to dampen these abnormal surges and still allow normal operation.

They could be inserted between supply source of house 110 volt 60 cycle and plug of portable.

We use far too many bulbs for lighting. I switched from G.E. to Westinghouse but they still burn out.

As a boy I remember that the Staten Island Edison had street lighting circuits and extra lamp above the lower one, with



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reflectors so that when the lower one burned out the upper would light up. As I remember the upper bulb was much smaller.

J. R. Cuddihy
Hobart, N. Y.

Reply by Donald McNicol—Usually the Public Service Electric Companies maintain stable voltage for 110 volt supply, not getting above 116 volts. Have you asked them about it, or whether they have voltage stabilizers for use of customers. A concern that makes voltage regulators is Sorensen & Co., 375 Fairfield Ave., Stamford, Conn.

If the voltage stays up around 135 to 150 most of the time you could hook up, say, 3 25-watt lamps in series and connect them in one leg of the 110 volt supply between house plug-in and the radio set. This would reduce the voltage. But when voltage is 110, these lamps might reduce it too much for radio. By means of a switch such an added circuit could be cut in and out as desired.

BOOK of Martyrs may be valuable.

Query: Would like to know if you have anybody in your department who could give me any information regarding old books such as Foxe's Book of Martyrs.

Have read Adventure for years—think it is TOPS. Also, whatever became of (author) Arthur O. Freel?

William F. Corbin
Peoria, Illinois

Reply by Kenneth A. Fowler: John Foxe (1516-1587) was an English clergyman. At an early age he became a Protestant and on Mary Tudor's accession fled England and sought safety in Strasbourg. There, in 1554, was printed a volume in Latin, giving the history of the persecution of Reformers from the time of Wyclif to 1500—the first part of the "Book Of Martyrs." Going on to Basel, he became assistant to a printer, and, in 1559, the first complete edition, in Latin, of his history of the Christian Martyrs was published.

Foxe was connected, also with the printing business of John Day, who issued, (1562) the first complete *English* edition of Foxe's master work, under the title, "Actes And Monuments of These Latter And Perilous Days. . . . By John Foxe." As history, Foxe's book is not regarded as altogether trustworthy, although in its day it exerted an active influence in fanning England's hatred of Spain and the Spanish Inquisition.

If there are any other old books you

would particularly like to ask me about, I should be pleased to have your inquiries, and will do my best to answer them. Incidentally, if you possess an early copy of the "Book Of Martyrs," I would suggest that you offer it for appraisal to a reliable dealer in old books. One such that I can recommend is Dawson's Book Store, Los Angeles, Calif., which maintains a staff of experts on incunabula.

FOR a fast getaway—and the long, long road.

I have a 1948 Studebaker Champion. It no longer seems to have its old pickup or speed. I would like to know if there is any way of improving it. I have heard a lot about changing the camshafts and putting dual carburetors on them but would like to know the best way that wouldn't run into too much money.

Kenneth Bohannan
Cedar Vale, Kansas.

Reply by Walt Woestman: The 1948 Studebaker Champion is one of the best, in my opinion, light cars built. However, if you want to packrabbit yours, here's how you might try.

A friend of mine had one and he fitted a WEIAND head with 8 to 1 compression ratio. This head raised the top speed by 12 mph and the pick-up was helped quite a bit.

However, it is necessary to use Ethyl gasoline with this higher compression.

WEIAND also makes a manifold for both two and three carburetors and this should give even greater speed and pick-up, but possibly less economy.

Of course the cam could be reground but this would be rather expensive and I wouldn't recommend it for ordinary road use.

The WEIAND head sells for $43.25 and the manifold for $33.00. My suggestion would be to try only the head first.

These may be obtained from BELL AUTO PARTS, 3633 E. GAGE AVE., BELL, CALIFORNIA.

●

Adventure is pleased to announce the addition of Mr. Kenneth A. Fowler to its staff of experts, in response to numerous inquiries concerning rare, and possibly valuable books. Mr. Fowler may be addressed in care of this magazine, or at the address given in The Experts' listing.

—THE EDITORS

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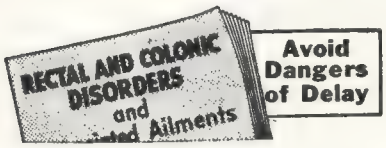

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Archery—EARL B. POWELL, c/o *Adventure.*

Auto Racing—WALT WOESTMAN, 2310 Midlothian Drive, Altadena, Calif.

Baseball—FREDERICK LIEB, c/o *Adventure.*

Basketball—STANLEY CARHART, 99 Broad St., Mattawan, N. J.

Big Game Hunting in North America: *Guides and equipment*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventure.*

Boxing—COL. JOHN V. GROMBACH, c/o *Adventure.*

Camping and Outdoor Cookery—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Canoeing—H. S. M. KEMP, 501 10th St., E., Prince Albert, Sask., Canada.

Coins and Medals—WILLIAM L. CLARK, American Numismatic Society, Broadway at 156th, N. Y. C.

Fencing—COL. JOHN V. GROMBACH, c/o *Adventure.*

Fishing, Fresh Water—*Fly and bait casting; bait casting outfits; fishing trips*—JOHN ALDEN KNIGHT, 929 W 4th St., Williamsport, Penna.

Fishing, Salt Water: *Bottom fishing, surf casting; trolling; equipment and locations*—C. BLACKBURN MILLER, c/o *Adventure.*

Fly and Bait Casting Tournaments—"CHIEF" STANWOOD, East Sullivan, Maine.

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Horses and Horsemanship—JOHN RICHARD YOUNG, c/o *Adventure.*

Lost Treasure: *Tales of lost mines and treasure*—RAYMOND DOW, 2922 164th St., Flushing, N. Y.

Motor Boating—GERALD T. WHITE, Montville, N. J.

Motorcycling: *Regulations, mechanics, racing*—CHARLES M. DODGE, c/o *Adventure.*

Rare Books and First Editions—KENNETH A. FOWLER, c/o *Adventure,* or P.O. Box 85, Copake Falls, N. Y.

Rifles, Pistols, Revolvers: *American and foreign*—ROY S. TINNEY, Brielle, N. J.

Shotguns: *American and foreign; wing shooting and field trials; gunsmithing*—ROY S. TINNEY, Brielle, N. J.

Skiing—WILLIAM C. CLAPP, The Mountain Book Shop, North Conway, N. H.

Small Boating and Cruising: *Skiffs, sailboats, powerboats, outboards*—COL. ROLAND BIRNN, c/o *Adventure.*

Songs of Campfire, Foc'sle and Bunkhouse—HARRY KIRBY MCCLINTOCK, 3911 So. Pacific Ave., San Pedro, Calif.

Swimming—LOUIS DEB. HANDLEY, 115 West 11th St., N. Y., N. Y.

Track—JACKSON SCHOLZ, R. D. No. 2, Doylestown, Pa.

Woodcraft—PAUL M. FINK, Jonesboro, Tenn.

Wrestling—MURL E. THRUSH, New York Athletic Club, 59th St. and 7th Ave., N. Y., N. Y.

SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SUBJECTS

Anthropology: *American, north of the Panama Canal; customs, dress, architecture, pottery and decorative arts, weapons and implements, fetishism, social divisions*—ARTHUR WOODWARD, Los Angeles Museum, Exposition Park, Los Angeles, Calif.

Entomology: *Insects and spiders; venomous and disease-carrying insects*—DR. S. W. FROST, 465 Foster Ave., State College, Penna.

Forestry, North American: *The U. S. Forestry Service, our national forests, conservation and use*—A. H. CARHART, c/o *Adventrue.*

Forestry, Tropical: *Tropical forests and products*—WM. R. BARBOUR, care of U. S. Forest Service, Glenn Bld., Atlanta, Ga.

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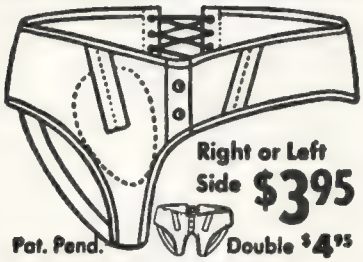

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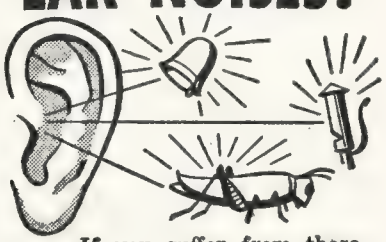

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LOST TRAILS

NOTE: We offer this department to readers who wish to get in touch again with friends or acquaintances separated by years or chance. Give your own name and full address. Please notify *Adventure* immediately should you establish contact with the person you are seeking. Space permitting, each inquiry addressed to *Lost Trails* will be run in three consecutive issues. Requests by and concerning women are declined as not considered effective in a magazine published for men. *Adventure* also will decline any notice that may not seem a sincere effort to recover an old friendship, or that may not seem suitable to the editors for any other reason. No charge is made for publication of notices.

Would very much like to get any news concerning Arthur Carl last heard of in Miami in 1922. He served with me in the English Machine Gun Corps during World War I in France. He left England after the War for the U.S.A. and was making good in Miami when suddenly all news from him stopped. Colonel G. Gauntlett, 18 Vine Road, East Molesey, Surrey, England.

Information wanted about Camerond Cox. Was in Rhyolite, Nevada in 1906. Write R. E. Ware, Clemson, S. C.

As a matter of interest I would like to hear from any one who knew Corporal Francis D. Howard, Company A. 109th Infantry. 28th Division. Killed in action July 16, 1918 at Chateau-Thiery. H. Thorne Arnold, 221 E. 46th St., New York 17, N. Y.

Sweeck, Joseph E., U.S. soldier, U.S. sailor. According to War Dept. Records was discharged from U.S.S. Denver on Pacific coast 1917. Gave us as his forwarding address, 255 Shelton Ave., New Haven, Conn. Never arrived. May be amnesia victim. A reward will be paid for proof of his existence or evidence of his death. Please write Tom E. Long, Box 203, Key West, Florida.

Would like to get in touch with Walter Narton, deep-sea diver on the battleship Arkansas in World War One. The family once lived in Springfield, Mass. Please notify Dawes Alward, Box 868, Waterford, N. Y.

I would like to make contact with an old friend in Lost Trails. I would appreciate it if any one knowing the whereabouts of Dewey Kornegay would contact me. We were shipmates for three years on the cruiser U.S.S. Milwaukee during the war. The last I heard of him he was on the U.S.S. Montauck, in 1944. Contact Jack D. Mays GM3 USNR #266-13-82, U.S. Naval Hospital, Navy 961 Box 8, c/o F.P.O. San Francisco, California.

(Continued from page 83)

with his weight. He scrabbled wildly with his feet against the steep side of the canyon as Slade pulled him slowly and steadily upward until he was able to grab at the top with his hands and pull himself over. He scrambled on all fours to the nearest boulder and threw his arms around it.

Finally he sat up, prepared to make his apology to Slade. But Slade wasn't looking at him. He seemed to be fully occupied at the moment in preparing his pipe for smoking. The serious procedure was identical to the hundred other times Courtney could remember—even to the exact three shavings of tobacco.

Courtney heard himself laughing then. Almost hysterically. "Slade," he said, and stopped. This wasn't going to be so easy. For the first time in his life he was groping for words, and making a mess of the whole thing. "I'm sorry for what I said down there—I thought that you—" he stopped then, finding it harder than ever to put into words the doubts and mistrust of the man before him.

Slade calmly lit his pipe. He looked directly at Courtney then. "It's all right," he said, "I—had the same idea about you, Courtney." His face reddened. "I'm glad now that I pulled you out — I almost didn't." He stopped awkwardly.

Courtney heaved a great sigh.

"Slade," he said, and he grinned at the big man standing there before him, "you're a good partner, but you talk too much."

Slade's answering grin was slow in coming, but when it did, it spread across his face and into his eyes. He picked up his pack and slung it across his shoulders.

"Yeah," he said in his deep, slow voice, "I'm a great talker."

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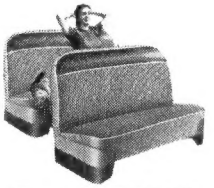

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